MONEYBALL

by

Stan Chervin

Based on the book *MONEYBALL: The Art of Winning An Unfair Game*
by
Michael Lewis

PRODUCERS:
Michael De Luca
Rachael Horovitz

DIRECTOR: David Frankel

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"Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first call promising."

- Cyrill Connolly
Enemies of Promise

FADE IN ON: A COMPLETELY *WHITE SCREEN* - A SUPERTITLE APPEARS:

The first thing they always do is run you.

The "white" starts to thin, becoming transparent. Dark SHAPES moving in odd ways become visible. We soon realize that the "white" is dense early morning Pacific Ocean fog and we're at-

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD, HERBERT HOOVER HIGH, SAN DIEGO - DAWN

The shapes are six BASEBALL PROSPECTS warming up. They're teenagers - boys, really. Each wears his high school uniform, with his name on back. One, a big white kid, says: "BEANE."

SUPERTITLE: **SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA - APRIL, 1980**

Nine pro BASEBALL SCOUTS, gray shadows in the fog, study the boys, stone-faced. They all look eerily identical: over 40 and overweight, in a windbreaker, chewing tobacco. The only difference is the big league team logo on their baseball cap.

The boys line up to race. A Scout paces off 60 yards; raises his arm - ready, set, GO! *The boys take off running*. It's all over in 6.5 seconds: the big white kid wins by three strides.

The scouts are shocked: big white kids can't run! The oldest, WOLF TEMPLAR, 57, weathered face under a NY Mets hat showing a life of squinting in the sun, turns to nod at the winner.

WOLF
I've known scouts who swore you can tell how a guy will do in pro ball -

F/X SHOT: "THE GOOD FACE" - STOCK FOOTAGE

The greats, at their absolute *youngest*, turn to the camera - MAYS, MANTLE, WILLIAMS, KOUFAX, REGGIE JACKSON, and RIPKEN.

WOLF (V.O.)
Just from his face.

EXT. CAR, OVERLOOKING OCEAN - SUNSET - MOVE IN FROM BEHIND

Car parked on a bluff. MOVE IN: "BEANE" jersey on the back of the driver. PAN AROUND TO FRONT: "Beane" writes in a notebook - we glimpse a graph, the line going down. He **SLAPS** it shut.

WOLF (V.O.)
This kid, Billy Beane, has it -

Just as camera PANS UP to reveal "Beane's" face **SMASH CUT TO:**

The *40-year old* BILLY BEANE. Hardly the face of success. Yes, matinee idol good looks still, but now showing wear and tear.

WOLF (V.O.)
"The Good Face."

Billy drives an old SUV. He never passes another car. Because-

PAN OUT TO SHOW: EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - BILLY'S CAR - DAY

Billy drives around an empty Oakland Coliseum. His car is all that moves in the vast acres of empty parking lots.

A SECURITY GUARD in a booth, the only living soul out here, waves down Billy, who slows as he drives by. The Guard points to a small TV in his booth: an A's-Yankees game plays on it.

SECURITY GUARD
I watched you go round and round, every game, all season, and didn't say boo. I can't let you miss this game. Come watch, Billy. Just once!

Billy smiles, but waves him off. He resumes his circling. The Guard watches Billy go, then shakes his head, pitifully.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Billy drives. Soon, he succumbs: he turns on his radio.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)
...Johnny Damon and Jason Giambi, the two players who carried the A's all year, do it again here in New York in the 9th. Damon represents the tieing run at 3rd which he reached thanks to a clutch double by Giambi, the go-ahead run on 2nd. But with a full count on Crosby, the A's are down to their last strike. Here's the pitch! It's-

Billy hits a button: radio switches to NPR.

N.P.R. BROADCAST (ON RADIO)
...letters containing anthrax were sent to Senate offices less than a month after September 11th attacks-

Not knowing is worse. Billy pulls over and switches back to-

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)
...Yankees win! Beating the A's 3 games to 2 to advance to the ALCS!
(Billy HITS his dashboard)
Is this Oakland's last hurrah? All their best players become free agents. I doubt A's General Manager Billy Beane can keep any of them. Rich teams, like the Yankees, can always outspend the poor ones, like the A's, and buy the top talent.

TAGGERT, Billy's black-and-white border collie, pops up in back. He licks Billy. Even that can't cheer him. He looks up.

PAN UP TO: Looming over Billy are two 4-story tall banners of A's star players JASON GIAMBI and JOHNNY DAMON hanging on the sides of the Stadium. They look down at Billy, tauntingly.

INT. LIVING ROOM, BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

No decorations; a sofa, a TV, books on shelves (more still in boxes) along with a few framed photos. Billy is on the phone.

BILLY
Yeah, hey, do you have a dinner reservation for a Scott Boras?

LAUREN KOLTAI, 35, a beauty in T-shirt and panties, tapes six mock-up posters for a Magritte exhibition at the S.F. Museum of Modern Art next June to the wall. Steps back to eye them.

LAUREN
What are you doing?

BILLY
Trying to reach Damon's agent.
(Into phone)
Can I leave a message for him? It's "Call Billy. Urgent!"...I tried his cell...Just get it to him, please.

Billy hangs up. As he starts to dial a new number, he points to the "CURATOR: Lauren Koltai" at the bottom of one mock-up.

BILLY
This needs to be much bigger.

LAUREN
Yeah, screw Magritte, I'm the big draw. The season ended weeks ago. When are you ever going to relax?

BILLY
Not tonight. At midnight, free-agents can start accepting offers from other teams. I lose my exclusivity on my guys.

LAUREN
Join the club. I have to share my boyfriend with baseball.

EXT. BORAS SPORTS MANAGEMENT, NEWPORT BEACH - EARLY MORNING

SCOTT BORAS, in a $3,000 suit, parks his Lexus. Heading into his office, he stops: Billy, in coat and tie, waits outside.

BILLY
Hey, Scott, how about now? Got time to talk to me now?

SCOTT BORAS
Geez, Billy, you're like a stalker.

BILLY
I wouldn't be if you'd return my calls.

SCOTT BORAS
I did. I stopped because you won't accept facts. Give up already.

BILLY
A *one* year deal. That's all I want. I need Damon for one more year.

SCOTT BORAS
Boston can guarantee him four.

BILLY
Johnny doesn't have to move to Boston to get beat by the Yankees. He can stay in Oakland. Does Johnny know any house in Boston will cost six times what he'd pay up there?

SCOTT BORAS
Not a problem. Red Sox got a new owner, John Henry. Says he'll spend to win the Series - he's giving Johnny $8 million a year. Forget it, Billy. It's Boston.

A moment as Billy absorbs this defeat, then bounces back.

BILLY
Good. Now I can focus on Jason - he's the guy I *really* want.

EXT. TENNIS COURT, BEVERLY HILLS - LATE MORNING

Billy, still in coat and tie, stands off-court talking to ARN TELLEM, in tennis clothes, as Arn plays tennis.

ARN TELLEM
I have to do what's best for Jason.

BILLY
Arn, please, be honest! Just say "Whoever pays Jason the biggest shit load of cash." Let me try. I can structure a deal that's competitive with any team.

Point over, Arn stops. Turns to Billy, reluctant to tell him -

ARN TELLEM
Yankees offered Jason $120 million for 7 years.

The huge number throws even Billy. He's momentarily stunned.

ARN TELLEM
Now you see why I have to close.

BILLY
<u>DON'T</u>! Let me talk to my owner.

ARN TELLEM
Roy Rorich won't change how he does business. You've got the only owner who makes players pay for sodas in the clubhouse.

BILLY
At *cost*, Arn, <u>*no*</u> mark up. Rorich will change. I'll make him. He's smart, I'll get him to see the only way to compete today is to spend.
(Arn prepares to serve)
Work with me! I need time. When the A's drafted Jason, he was a skinny kid from Covina who couldn't throw, couldn't field, couldn't run - he *still* can't run - and couldn't hit with power. <u>*We*</u> waited! Waited for Jason to develop into league M.V.P.
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
It took six *years*. Now you can't give me *a day*? One GOD DAMN day!

Arn stops what he's doing. He throws Billy a bone.

ARN TELLEM
You've got until nine tomorrow.

BILLY
Thanks. I'll talk to Rorich today.

EXT. TRACT HOME DEVELOPMENT - AFTERNOON

Someday, 200 brand new 3-bedroom "McMansions" will be here. Now, there are 200 empty lots where dozens of LABORERS work - pouring cement, unloading lumber, and erecting framework.

Totally out of place amidst men and materials is a big, black Mercedes limousine. Billy walks up to it. The uniformed CHAUFFEUR opens the rear door for him to get in.

INT. MERCEDES LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Billy sits. Luxury on wheels - TV, mini-bar, etc. ROY RORICH, 55, patrician good looks, hand-made suit, shakes hands hello, but never stops talking into his cellphone.

RORICH
Up my offer to $32 a share, but it expires in an hour. That's ten million over closing - get them to take it or else don't call back.
(Hangs up, nods at phone)
Sorry, I'm in the middle of an L.B.O. Every so often you get a Board of Directors that has to kill the deal just to say they did. What's so urgent, Billy?

BILLY
Giambi, the league MVP, is about to become a god damn *Yankee*! We can keep him, but I need more money.

RORICH
I told you when I promoted you to G.M. that you had to work within a limited budget.

BILLY
It's too small now. Giambi, Damon, and Isringhausen, our top reliever,
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
will make $33 million next year. *3 guys*. That's what you give me for my whole team, 25 players! The Yankees spend $126 million.

Rorich's cellphone RINGS. He answers it.

RORICH
(Into phone)
Yeah...YOU FUCKING IDIOT!

EXT. TRACT HOME DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Billy follows Rorich, angrily heading across the development.

RORICH
I had a team with Giambi, Damon and Isringhausen already. They lost.

BILLY
We made it to the playoffs

RORICH
Where you *lost*. To the *Yankees*. Now you want me to spend $33 million *more*. For the same team that lost. It makes no sense.
(Stops, turns to Billy)
No.

They've reached a CONTRACTOR in a hard hat, holding plans, ten dirty Laborers, and a backhoe next to a HUGE hole. Rorich sees a foot of muddy water in it. He turns on the Contracor.

RORICH
I'm out $20,000 a day until that gets fixed. Get the hell out!
(Grabs the plans from him)
GO! I'll get my grandson. He's six. He knows how to dig a GODDAMN HOLE!

Rorich turns and heads back to his limo. Billy follows.

BILLY
"No?" "No" you won't spend more?

RORICH
No, I won't. I can't.

BILLY
You can. I just heard you offer $10 million *more.* Give me $10 million I'll use it to keep Giambi.

RORICH
Players are raw material, like dry wall or cement. Here - the most valuable piece of equipment on any job site.

He lifts the lid on a 10-gallon Thermos cooler sitting on the tailgate of a truck: it's full of ice, turning to ice water in the hot sun. Rorich nods toward the laborers.

RORICH
As long as they have cold water, they'll work out here, in the hot sun, all day. Once it's gone, forget it - you can actually see their productivity drop. Just send them all home, they're done.
(Turns to Billy)
Ballplayers are like ice, Billy - get all you can before they melt.

They're at the limo. Rorich gets in. The door stays open.

RORICH
I want one thing from the A's - profit. At our current payroll, the revenue from tickets, concessions, radio, TV, and parking guarantees I'll make money. No reason to spend more.

BILLY
When you spend more, you win more. Don't you want to beat the Yankees?

RORICH
You'll *never* beat them, Billy. You can't. It's an unfair game.

BILLY
I could if I had more money.

RORICH
Call around then, try other owners. If you find a better job, take it.

EXT. ROWES WHARF MARINA, BOSTON - DAY

The biggest yacht you'll ever see. Boston skyline in the b.g. The 3-man CREW is busy on the deck, preparing to set sail. A limousine pulls up. JOHN HENRY, tall, distinguished, gray-haired, gets out. He walks down the dock toward the yacht.

BILLY (O.S.)
Mr. Henry! Hold on a sec.

Billy, in coat and tie, has been waiting for him. He runs up to John Henry, who keeps walking down the dock, not stopping.

BILLY
I'm Billy Beane. I want to run the Red Sox.

JOHN HENRY
I may be a new owner, but even I know talking to another team's G.M. is considered tampering.

BILLY
Tampering is when I go to your office and you offer me a job. Two guys who run into each other on the dock and share their hopes and dreams is a beer commercial.

Reaching the yacht, John Henry boards. A CAPTAIN greets him.

CAPTAIN
Sir?

JOHN HENRY
Go ahead. Don't wait.

As the Crew unties mooring ropes, STARTS the engine, he turns-

JOHN HENRY
Go back to Oakland, Billy. Come see me after you've done something.

John Henry's boat slowly starts moving, into the bay. Leaving Billy behind. Pissed, Billy walks down the dock, parallel.

BILLY
We made the playoffs this year!

JOHN HENRY
With a team you inherited. Give me Giambi and Damon, we'd win, too.

BILLY
You already *took* Damon.

JOHN HENRY
I buy *proven* success. That's not you. You've never won anything on your own. Do that, then call me.

An angry Billy reaches the dock's end. But the boat sails on.

BILLY
No! YOU'LL CALL *ME*. MY A'S WILL WIN MORE GAMES THAN ANYONE THIS YEAR!

INT. LIVING ROOM, BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The final Magritte exhibit poster, with Lauren's name on it, hangs on a wall. Billy multi-tasks: he talks on the phone, checks a scouting report, AND answers the front **DOORBELL.**

BILLY
No, Esteban! I'm after Esteban, your AA shortstop...Hold on.
(Switches calls)
Got a name yet?...Are you on drugs! Franco sucks. Why would I want him? Try again. I'll give you a minute.

Billy open the door to MIKE "MAGS" MAGNATNE, 36, Billy's best friend and an A's relief pitcher, and his wife, JILL, with a bottle of wine. Billy covers the phone as he waves them in.

BILLY
Hey, guys, come in, come in.
(Calling out)
LAUREN! Mags and Jill are here.
(To them, points at phone)
Rorich won't budge. So I have to use beads and wampum to gerryrig a trade with six moving parts just to get a cheap left fielder.
(Back into phone)
How can you not know where Esteban is?...Well, somewhere in Venezuela there's a working phone - find him.

Lauren comes out of the kitchen. Kisses Mags and Jill hello.

LAUREN
Hi! It's so good to see you, but I timed this meal all wrong. It's at this crucial phase so I really have to be in the kitchen right now.

JILL
Need any help?

LAUREN
More than you know. Billy doesn't own one decent knife. Thanks.

Jill goes in the kitchen. Lauren follows, stops at the door.

LAUREN
This is a dish we have to eat hot. If it sits, the veal gets tough.

BILLY
I really need this player, he's key to rebuilding the team. It'll take one minute, at the most, I promise.

Billy holds up his index finger - "One minute." Lauren, looking doubtful, exits. Billy is back on the phone.

BILLY
Hey, got a real name for me yet?... Much better! I'll take Ramirez - but it'll cost you another $25,000.

MAGNANTE
Hey, Tom says you haven't closed my deal yet. I checked before we left. You have the right number for him?

BILLY
(Covers phone)
Mags, I've got bigger problems than your contract right now.
(Into phone)
Yeah, if you want Esteban, you need to give me Ramirez *and* $25,000.
(Stops. Checks report-)
"*Stefan*?" You told me Esteban. I've chased him all- SHIT!...Stefan. *The Cubs'* Stefan, right?... Hold on.
(Switches to other phone)
Hey, I'm out. The deal's off.

MAGNANTE
The thing is - we're due to close escrow Monday. But I won't if, you know, there might be any...problem.

BILLY
Not now, Mags!
(Back into phone)
Because I can't wait for you to find Stefan...*Esteban* - whoever! I'm pulling out. Maybe next time.

Billy hangs up. Starts dialing a new call, but when finally focuses on Magnante, he stops: Billy can see he's worried.

BILLY
All this contract stuff is coming from Jill, isn't it?
(Mags nods)
Tell your wife, who I adore, I take care of my friends. You know that.

Beat. Mags nods acceptance, embarrassed he panicked.

BILLY
Good. You doing your P.T.? We lost Isringhausen - I'm counting on you to pick up the slack in the pen.

Magnante rotates his left arm, mimes throwing a pitch.

MAGNANTE
Yeah, I'm fine. But you look like crap. Any luck with Damon?

BILLY
Nope. Gone.

MAGNANTE
Shit. Giambi?

BILLY
Yankees. $120 million.

MAGNANTE
$120 million! Man, I should've been a hitter.

BILLY
Yeah. Me, too.

Billy resumes dialing...just as Lauren and Jill come out of the kitchen. They carry plates of food to the dining table

LAUREN
Veal *Milanese*, topped with arugula and baby tomato salad, and mushroom risotto. Come eat, Billy.

BILLY
(Into phone)
Hey, it's Billy...I know it's late.
(To Mags, Jill and Lauren)
Go ahead, you start. Don't wait.

Mags, trying to help, quickly sits at the table. Jill, caught between Billy and Lauren, joins him. Lauren doesn't sit.

LAUREN
Please, call him back tomorrow.

BILLY
(Into phone)
I might be able to use your guy Stefan. What do you want for him?

LAUREN
We need to eat this. Now.

BILLY
(Covers phone)
Almost done.

LAUREN
You said you wouldn't work tonight.

BILLY
It isn't work - I'm making a trade.
(Into phone)
Can't use him. I want Stefan.
(Covers phone, to Lauren)
Smells great. What is it again?

LAUREN
Ruined.

Beat. Billy realizes he's in real trouble.

BILLY
(Into phone)
I need to call you back.

He hangs up. A very awkward silence. Jill stands.

JILL
Oh, the wine! Mags, come open it.

MAGNANTE
Just bring the corkscrew out here.

JILL
Mags. Kitchen. Now.

He gets it. Quickly follows her into the kitchen. Beat.

BILLY
I'm sorry, but it's my job.

LAUREN
Which makes you miserable. Want to be happy? Find another job.

BILLY
I can't do anything else.

LAUREN
You run the Oakland A's, a multi-million dollar business. You can apply those skills to any business.

BILLY
No one hires a *high-school graduate* to be C.E.O. So for me to keep the only job I can get is I have to put together a team that wins. This is important. I really need this guy.

LAUREN
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME! You need him, you can't live without him, your whole future is riding on him - until he plays badly. Then you can't get rid of him fast enough. Or worse, he plays *great* - then leaves you as soon as he can for more money. None of it matters.
(Beat)
It's always the same - you on the losing end. You need a different solution, Billy.

BILLY
I don't. I need a left fielder!

EXT. PARKING LOT, OAKLAND STADIUM - MORNING

Billy and Taggert exit his SUV. Billy opens the back and hunts among the debris of papers, junk, and fast food bags. He finds his coat. He also finds this morning's half-eaten breakfast burrito. Billy takes a bite as he heads inside.

Spotting Billy, six REPORTERS waiting at the front door shout questions. GRAHAM LUTZ, 55, obese, bald, chain-smoking, shouts the loudest.

GRAHAM LUTZ
Billy, will the fans still come out now that you've lost Giambi?

BILLY
I don't know, Graham. Will they listen to your insipid radio show?

INT. RECEPTION, A’S EXECUTIVE OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Tiny. A RECEPTIONIST. ‘74 World Series Trophy in a case. Billy enters. His assistant, BETTY SHINODA, 39, is waiting.

BETTY
The coaching staff is here, waiting for you in the Conference room.

She and Taggert follow Billy into a gloomy warren of *tiny* windowless offices and cubicles with drab-colored walls. They turn a corner: Six YOUNG WOMEN sit along the wall. Five are groomed and subtly sexy, one is plain, a bit sloppy. MALE WORKERS find excuses to walk down the hall to eye the talent.

BILLY
What’s this?

BETTY
You need to replace Allison. These are the candidates.

Betty hands him six resumes. He immediately hands them back.

BILLY
I don’t have time for this, Betty. You do it. Hire whoever you want.
(Turns to applicants)
Ladies, thanks for your interest. I’m sorry I couldn’t hire you all.

He takes a stack of cards from his coat pocket. Billy walks down the line handing one to each applicant.

BILLY
You can redeem this for two seats in the outfield plaza to any game. Come watch! Should be a great year.

They reach the Conference Room at the end of the hall. Billy starts to enter...until Betty stops him. Points at his hand.

BILLY
Oh, right, thanks.

Billy has been holding his half-eaten breakfast burrito the whole time. He hands it off to Betty, then goes in the room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, A’S OFFICES - DAY

A board on the wall lists all A’s players; with the *starters*

on a diamond diagram by position. A's Manager ART HOWE, 55, stocky, taciturn, 3rd Base Coach RON WASHINGTON, 53, black, wiry, Pitching Coach RICK PETERSON, a good ol' boy, two COACHES and Wolf, now 77, watch Billy take "ISRINGHAUSEN" off the bullpen, remove "DAMON" at left, and "GIAMBI" from 1st.

BILLY
I'm working the phones, but what's available ain't pretty. I'm open to any suggestions who we should get.

Billy flings all the names into a metal trash can - **CLANNGG!**

ART HOWE
I really believe in *Jeremy* Giambi, Jason's brother, to play left.

BILLY
Jeremy Giambi, Art? You managed a team with Jason and couldn't beat the Yankees, we sure won't do it with his stunt double.

ART HOWE
I would've made Jason part owner, if that's what it took to keep him.

BILLY
Rorich might disagree.

WOLF
There's some free agents we could go after - Travis, Nunez, Lee.

BILLY
Free agents aren't free, they're expensive! Every team wants those guys. Wash, you're infield coach - who can we get to play first base?

WASHINGTON
Jefferson, from the Cards. I don't care what he costs, he's worth it.

BILLY
None of you are hearing me!

Billy stands, takes out his wallet, and SLAPS all his cash down on the table. He turns to the coaches, challengingly

BILLY
I'm talking about *money*. Real *money.* Put *your* money in there,
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
see how it feels. Art, you drive a 6-year old car. *A free agent is a new car!* Now you get it? That way won't work for us.

Silence. The coaches shift, uncomfortable. Peterson steps up.

RICK PETERSON
I can help you with a relief pitcher to replace Isringhausen.

BILLY
Great, Rick. Let the bullpen speak.

RICK PETERSON
Benton, that high school kid we drafted last year - 19 years old, with a 99 m.p.h. fastball.

WOLF
Looks like a young Tom Seaver.

BILLY
That's great if I was selling posters. Benton pitches like Starbucks, he's all over the place.

The door opens: VANESSA, the plain, sloppy job applicant, enters. She goes to Billy, hands him six letters and a pen.

BILLY
Who are you?

VANESSA
Vanessa. You just hired me. Betty told me to type these and bring them to you. They need to go out.

BILLY
Sure. Thanks. Here.

Billy signs the letters. Vanessa takes them and exits. As soon as she is safely gone, all the coaches start to HOWL.

RICK PETERSON
You hired *her* to replace Allison the Fox?

COACH
You still straight, Billy?

WASHINGTON
She looks just like Art.

ART HOWE
Except I'm prettier.

WOLF
I can't believe *you* hired <u>her</u>.

Billy is oblivious to it: he's watching Vanessa as she goes.

BILLY
Yeah. Neither can I. Hang on.

Billy stands and walks out. The coaches look at each other.

INT. BETTY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Betty is working. Billy pokes his head in.

BILLY
Hey, Betty, why Vanessa?

BETTY
I gave them a typing test. She was the fastest - 110 words a minute.

Billy looks over: *Vanessa types like a demon*. Her hands are a blur, her computer screen is filling rapidly with text.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, A'S STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Billy enters, still lost in thought. The coaches look at him, expectantly. Billy looks at them. Turns to Rick Peterson.

BILLY
What reliever has the best numbers?

RICK PETERSON
Like I say, Benton looks good and his E.R.A. is okay for -

BILLY
Forget how a guy looks. Focus on numbers for now. And don't limit it to our teams - what pitcher had the best statistics in all AAA?
(As Rich and Wolf talk, check scouting reports)
Most K's? Fewest walks? Give me a name.

RICK PETERSON
Maybe Chad Bradford, Indians AAA. No homers, 12 walks, in 53 innings.

BILLY
This is what I'm after! A minor leaguer has to be cheap. I get Bradford to replace Isringhausen.

WOLF
Using only stats is performance scouting. That's risky. Numbers can fool you. You need to look at a guy, see what he's got.

BILLY
Do we have tape on Chad?

RICK PETERSON
Yup. After you see this kid, Billy. you <u>won't</u> want him.

INT. VIDEO ROOM, A'S CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Two TV's and six VHS players, all old. A tiny room for four, Billy and the coaches make it the stateroom scene from *A Night At the Opera*. Adding to the Marx Brothers tone is no one can work the equipment. Billy sits staring at snow.

ART HOWE
TV has to be on channel 3.

RICK PETERSON
It is.

WASHINGTON
Hit that button there.

ART HOWE
Try "input" on "TV/VCR."

WOLF
Maybe the tape is blank.

RICK PETERSON
It's the right tape!

Billy's had enough. He leans out the open door to yell -

BILLY
FEINY!

DAN "FEINY" FEINSTEIN, the A.V. Club President grown up, enters, hits two buttons, and walks out as the tape plays.

RICK PETERSON
He's 28 years old and *still* in the minors. Now you see why.

ANGLE ON - TV SCREEN - BILLY'S P.O.V. -

<u>CHAD BRADFORD looks bizarre when he pitches</u>. Chad is very tall (6'5") and very thin (199 lbs.) He jack-knives at the waist so <u>his throwing hand drops to an *inch* off the ground</u>. Chad is a "submariner": he literally throws *up* at a hitter!

RESUME - VIDEO ROOM

Billy stares at the screen. Chad isn't what he expected.

RICK PETERSON
See what I mean, Billy?

BILLY
Yeah, I do. He looks really weird.
(Turns to his coaches)
As long as he gets guys out, he can toss the ball with his butt cheeks. I'm going after him.

Rick lets out a GROAN. The coaches share a look, roll their eyes, shake heads - this is a bad sign.

EXT. DIRT ROAD, CAR - DAY **SUPERTITLE:** BYRAM, MISSISSIPPI

Ramshackle houses. Cars on blocks. Half-naked kids play in the road. They stare at Billy's rental car as he parks in front of a house. Billy gets out. Sees the gate is open.

EXT. BACKYARD, BRADFORD HOME - DAY

A tire hangs over a plate at strike zone height 60' 6" away from a home made pitching mound...that Chad is in the middle of dismantling. Chad shovels mound dirt into a wheelbarrow.

BILLY (O.S.)
HEY, CHAD!

Billy walks up, shakes Chad's hand. Chad is so shy he looks at his feet the entire time they talk.

CHAD
Hey, Mr. Beane. I don't know why you came. Like I told you on the phone, my mind's made up. I'm done.

BILLY
First, "Mr. Beane" is my father. Second, why quit now?

CHAD
God is telling me to.

BILLY
I didn't know He followed baseball.

CHAD
I wanted to be a ballplayer since I was five. So I put my faith in the Lord. He has a plan for me. I've been in the minors six years and
(MORE)

CHAD (cont'd)
I ain't even close. God is telling me He has another use for me.

BILLY
He does. He sent me here.

CHAD
God spoke to you?

BILLY
Not directly. Listen, Chad, if I can get you away from Cleveland - you will be a major league pitcher.

Chad stares at Billy - disbelief fighting joy. Overcome with emotion, Chad drops to a knee, lowers his head, and prays. Billy isn't sure if he's supposed to join in. Leans down.

BILLY
You may want to wait on that - I still have to get your G.M., Mark Shapiro, to trade you. Even if I do I can't offer you much of a salary.

CHAD
(Stands, smiling broadly)
Heck, to pitch in the majors, I'd pay you.

BILLY
Chad, you're my kind of player.
(Shakes hands goodbye)
Nice mound. You should keep it.

Chad points to CHUCK BRADFORD, 68, sitting on the back porch.

CHAD
My dad made it when I was in high school. He taught me how to throw.
(SHOUTS to his father)
DAD! IT HAPPENED! I'M MOVING UP! Mr. Beane wants me on the A's!

ANGLE ON - CHUCK - BILLY'S P.O.V.

Chuck makes an odd gesture. It takes Billy a beat to realize: Chuck is waving. But *his arm doesn't rise above his shoulder*.

CHAD (O.S.)
He had a stroke when I was two.

RESUME - BILLY AND CHAD

Billy stares at Chuck - that explains a lot. Turns to Chad.

BILLY
The Lord works in mysterious ways. Let's hope he keeps it up. I need Mark to trade you to me. The hard part is I have to make it *his* idea.

CUT TO: A HUGE CLEVELAND INDIANS LOGO PAN DOWN TO:

MARK SHAPIRO, 40-ish, All-American, high-forehead, red hair, sits at a vast desk in front of the log, smiling broadly.

MARK SHAPIRO
What are you looking for, Billy?

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE, JACOBS FIELD - DAY

Mark's large, plush office overlooks Jacobs Field.

BILLY
Another $50 million for payroll.

MARK SHAPIRO
Can't help you. Try Giambi.

BILLY
Ouch. I'll settle for a reliever.

MARK SHAPIRO
Let me guess - you want him cheap.

BILLY
I can't hide any secrets from you.

Mark turns to study his board of players, like Billy's.

MARK SHAPIRO
How about McAdams?

BILLY
Cheap, Mark! Just a guy to be, you know, 12th or 13th man on my staff.

MARK SHAPIRO
Have to be a minor leaguer. Got anyone in mind?

BILLY
No, I'm wide open.
(Stands to go)
I'm asking all the teams so if you don't have anyone, that's okay -

MARK SHAPIRO
How about Richards?

BILLY
No lefties.

MARK SHAPIRO
Curzon.

BILLY
He's not right. *

MARK SHAPIRO
Roberto?

BILLY
Not him either.

MARK SHAPIRO
Chad Bradford?

BILLY
Bradford? He's in AAA, right?

MARK SHAPIRO
Nice kid, good numbers - just doesn't fit into our plans right now.

BILLY
(Calm, almost bored)
Okay. He'll do.

PAUL (O.S.)
That's a bad trade, Mark.

Billy turns: PAUL DE PODESTA, 26, thin, glasses, Brooks Brothers suit, sits on the office sofa. He has a laptop open in front of him. He's been there for quite some time.

BILLY
Where in hell did you come from?

MARK SHAPIRO
Billy, this is Paul De Podesta. He's been interning with us since he graduated. From Harvard.

BILLY
Not many Ivy Leaguers in baseball. Here, an "intellectual" is any guy who reads without moving his lips.

PAUL
Well, at Harvard an "athlete" is a guy who doesn't take the elevator.

Irritated Paul could screw his deal, Billy turns to Mark.

BILLY
Letting the interns run the show?

MARK SHAPIRO
Sorry. Paul blurts out stuff all the time. Some of it I even understand. Just ignore him.

PAUL
You shouldn't. If you use DIPS, you'll see Chad pitches even *better* than his usual numbers indicate.

MARK SHAPIRO
Paul really likes statistics.
(With a heavy sigh)
What are DIPS, Paul?

PAUL
Defense Independent Pitching Statistics. It uses only three stats pitchers control - home runs, strikeouts, and walks. Once a ball is in play, the fielders determine if it is a hit, not the pitcher. There's no difference among major league pitchers in giving up hits.

MARK SHAPIRO
See what I mean? All day with this.

BILLY
"No difference?" I'll take Sandy Koufax, you can have Tommy Lasorda.

PAUL
I mean, there *is* a difference. It's how it is measured that's wrong. Baseball uses the wrong stats.

Beat. That really registers with Billy. He looks at Paul.

BILLY
I used to keep my own stats.

EXT. CAR, OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - SUNSET - [REPEAT SHOT]

Car on a bluff. PAN IN ON: "BEANE" jersey on driver's back. PAN AROUND TO FRONT: He writes in a notebook: date, opponent, and how he hit. PAN UP TO FIND: The 17-YEAR-OLD BILLY BEANE.

BILLY (V.O.)
Always have, even in high school.

RESUME - G.M.'S OFFICE, JACOBS FIELD, CLEVELAND - DAY

PAUL
Then you should appreciate what I'm talking about. You're the only current G.M. who actually played. It makes you unique.

MARK SHAPIRO
He's unique, but not for how he *played*. The thing about players - they *never* give up. You have to tear the uniform off their back.

EXT. HOME PLATE - SHOT FROM ABOVE - DAY - [1990] - F/X SHOT

Billy, 29, in an Oakland A's uniform, is in the batter's box.

MARK SHAPIRO (V.O.)
Billy *voluntarily* quit.

Billy walks off the field. At the dugout, he suddenly turns *away* from the bench to go down the tunnel, cleats **CLACKING.**

INT. WOLF'S OFFICE - [1990] - CONTINUOUS

Billy, still in uniform, stands before Wolf, at his desk.

WOLF
Get out of here, Billy. You want to quit - quit! Go do something else.

BILLY
What? I got no college degree, I'm too old to start a career - I can't do anything else! Wolf, please.

Wolf looks at Billy. Sees his desperation. Finally -

WOLF
Hell, if you want to take a 75% pay cut, fine - you can scout for me.

HOLD ON: Billy - his face full of relief. And gratitude.

MARK SHAPIRO (V.O.)
Billy is the *only* guy in the history of baseball who ever left a major league roster to go scout.

INT. G.M.'S OFFICE, JACOBS FIELD

Paul looks at Billy, impressed. Billy shrugs it off.

BILLY
It wasn't such a big deal.

EXT. HOME PLATE - CLOSE ON BILLY - VARIOUS F/X SHOTS - DAY

The same at-bat from Mark's version. Now from Billy's P.O.V. E.C.U: Billy's FEET - HANDS - SHOULDERS - ELBOWS - LEGS - he fights to keep them still, but *can't*. They twitch, straining.

BILLY (V.O.)
Baseball was what it was.

SOUND F/X: Billy hears the smallest SOUND as absurdly **LOUD** - the **SCRAPE** of his cleats, his hand **TIGHTENING** on the bat, a bead of sweat **ROLL** down his face. Seems he can hear it all.

BILLY (V.O.)
I was who I was.

VISUAL F/X: Translucent walls appear around Billy, like force fields. They start to move in, squeezing Billy. *Crushing* him.

BILLY (V.O.)
We were a bad match.

RESUME - NORMAL: As before, Billy turns and walks off. We now see his relief: Billy's not quitting. He's escaping.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM

Showered and dressed, Billy puts his locker's personal items into a duffel. Turning to go, he stops: "BEANE" - his uniform on the floor. It hits him: he took it off for the last time.

Billy picks up his jersey. Hangs it up in his locker.

He gently straightens it on the hanger, makes it neat. Billy touches his uniform one last time - goodbye. Turns and exits.

INT. G.M.'S OFFICE, JACOBS FIELD

Billy, uneasy talking about his past, changes the subject.

BILLY
Bradford might work. I'll take him off your hands. Who do you want?

MARK SHAPIRO
I'll take Lee Davis.

BILLY
Davis is a top prospect for us. I'd need someone else besides Bradford.

MARK SHAPIRO
Who?

Billy points right at Paul.

BILLY
Him.

Beat. Mark thinks he's joking. So does Paul. Billy means it.

MARK SHAPIRO
I'm not sure I can trade him.

BILLY
You can make a deal for anyone.

MARK SHAPIRO
But Paul isn't a player. He's, like, a person. It's up to him.

BILLY
How about it? Want to work for me?

PAUL
One question - will I get paid?

BILLY
Not enough to live on. Except in Oakland.

INT. HALLWAY, A'S EXECUTIVE OFFICES - AFTERNOON

Billy, carrying his suitcase, leads Paul down to an office.

He nods in the open door. Paul looks in: Tiny. Windowless.

BILLY
This is you. That paycheck I sign makes you a baseball professional. How far you go depends on results.
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
(Turns and walks off)
Deliver, you stay. Fail, you go.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A romantic place. Lauren sits at a table, alone. Waiters' looks say she's been here a while. Billy hurries in, sits.

BILLY
Hey, sorry I'm late. Did you order?

LAUREN
Where have you been? You landed on time. You were supposed to be here an hour ago.

BILLY
Sorry. I hired a new Assistant G.M. and had to show him around. While I was there I heard about this Korean pitcher, Sing-A-Song, something like that. I lost track of time.

LAUREN
Well, it did give me time to chat up a cute waiter who told me about their scampi that's not on the menu-

Just then, Billy's cellphone **RINGS**. He checks the screen.

BILLY
Hang on -

LAUREN
Don't answer it, Billy.

BILLY
I have to. This Sing-Song kid has a cut fastball and he's cheap-

LAUREN
You can spend your life chasing some third baseman from Guatemala, but *I'm here*. And I'm starving.
(Beat)
Let's eat already, Billy. Please.

A tough choice. His phone ***RINGS***. He raises his index finger.

BILLY
One minute, I promise.
(Answering phone)
Hey, Sabes, is he available?

Lauren smiles. She holds up her index finger and mouths “One minute.” Billy nods. Lauren stands and walks off.

BILLY
(Into phone)
What if I get Seattle to send Lee to Tampa for Jackson, Jackson for my guy Harris, and Harris to you?

As Billy talks on the phone, he watches Lauren. To his surprise, she walks out the front door of the restaurant.

EXT. STREET, OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Billy comes out, still on his phone. He sees Lauren: she is halfway down the street, walking away, her back to him.

BILLY
(Into phone)
Let me know tomorrow then. Thanks.
(Hangs up, YELLS)
Lauren? Hey, Lauren!

She does not turn around. Billy watches her go - he blew it.

INT. “SPORTS BAR” RESTAURANT, AIRPORT HILTON - BREAKFAST

The closest restaurant to the Stadium. Oakland team uniforms, banners and photos on the wall. Several large TV’s, all playing ESPN. There’s an extensive breakfast buffet laid out.

Wolf, Art, Washington, Peterson and Coaches are watching TV when Billy enters with Paul. Billy looks at the television.

ANGLE ON - TELEVISION, *BASEBALL TODAY* SHOW - BILLY’S P.O.V.

JOE TORRE, New York Yankees manager, is being interviewed.

JOE TORRE
Part of my job as Yankees manager is creating a good team chemistry. You need that to win.

RESUME - RESTAURANT, AIRPORT HILTON -

Billy snaps off the TV. He heads for the breakfast buffet.

BILLY
I played for Torre. Team chemistry was great when we won, and bad when we lost.

Grabbing a plate, Billy *heaps* the contents of every tray - eggs, ham, bacon, sausage, potatoes, fruit, toast - onto it.

BILLY
I don't know how many have you met Paul De Podesta, our new assistant GM. He'll be helping me find new players, put the team together.

ART HOWE
Who'd you play for, Paul?

PAUL
I never played.

ART HOWE
I know you weren't in the bigs. I mean how far you get in the minors?

PAUL
I *never* played. Professionally. I was on the varsity team at Harvard.

Hearing "Harvard" the coaches roll their eyes. At the buffet, Paul, oblivious, takes a tiny scoop of eggs and *one* sausage.

PAUL
My inexperience gives me an advantage over you. The tendency of anyone who played is to generalize wildly from his own experience.
(Turns to the coaches)
That's a *huge* mistake.

Paul sits. Before he eats, he opens his laptop. The coaches, wary of Paul before, now eye him with suspicion.

BILLY
Okay, our biggest problem still - replacing Giambi.

ART HOWE
I want to bring Pena up from AAA.

BILLY
A rookie? Pena is no Giambi.

WASHINGTON
We got Jason's brother Jeremy playing right. Even he's not a Giambi, and he's a Giambi!

WOLF
No one is.

ART HOWE
It would take three players to replace Jason.

The Coaches LAUGH. Billy doesn't. Something clicks. He grins.

BILLY
You're right.

ART HOWE
Yeah, Pena is fast, too. He can-

BILLY
No. Not about Pena. About Giambi. I can't afford Jason Giambi. I *can* afford the pieces that make him up.

ART HOWE
What the hell you talking about?

BILLY
Look at Paul's laptop. Top-of-the-line SONY - how much it cost you?

PAUL
$2,755. I bought in Massachusetts so there was no sales tax.

BILLY
I need a laptop, but only got $500. So I buy some RAM, a motherboard, a hard drive and build my own. If we find the parts, we can build our own Giambi.

ART HOWE
No way. Giambi does too much. Home runs, drives in runs, plays first.

BILLY
We start with the piece that's most valuable - the one that makes runs.

WOLF
How in the hell do you find that?

BILLY
Probability.
(Turns to Paul)
Show them what you showed me.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy, Paul and the coaches are crammed into a tiny space *again*. A white board takes up one wall. Paul is writing on it - a complex equation that uses stats instead of numbers.

PAUL
If a player creates a run nine times, he's more likely to do it the tenth. Can we identify him?

Paul steps back to reveal: "**RUNS CREATED = (HITS + WALKS) X TOTAL BASES/(AT BATS + WALKS)**" He turns to the coaches.

PAUL
Yes, we can. Using probability. I've been working on this a while.

WASHINGTON
Then you wasted a *lot* of your time.

PAUL
No, look - slugging percentage and on-base percentage are the two stats that correlate most closely to winning.

WOLF
Where'd you find this guy, Billy?

BILLY
Cleveland.

PAUL
As a thought experiment, I had a team with an on-base percentage of 1.000 play a team with a slugging -

BILLY
(Interrupting him)
Hold the thought. To score a run, first you need to be on base.

PAUL
Put in its simplest form, yes.

ART HOWE
What other insights you got to help us - the sun rises in the east?

BILLY
I want to question everything.

Billy goes to the board. Circles “WALKS.” Turns to the room.

BILLY
A player who gets on with a walk can score. Just like the guy who gets a hit. Both have the same *potential* to create a run. So they have the same value.

WOLF
I’ll take a hitter any day.

BILLY
You and everyone else.

WASHINGTON
Because a double or triple and he’s in scoring position. Job is half done. A homer is good night, nurse.

PAUL
But probability always wins. Consider this - a player who walks <u>every</u> at-bat creates 648 chances for his team to score a run.

BILLY
(Laughing)
And his batting average would be .000. No sane GM would hire him.

INT. “SPORTS BAR” RESTAURANT, AIRPORT HILTON - LUNCH

Back for lunch. The coaches have burgers. Billy attacks the lunch buffet like he did breakfast, piling his plate high. Paul, at the salad bar, takes only cottage cheese and fruit.

BILLY
I had Paul run every player through his formula.

PAUL
You’ll find them ranked, in order, from those players who create the most runs down to the fewest.

He passes out copies. Billy reads his, as he wolfs down food.

BILLY
“Bonds...Sosa...A-Rod” - How about one guy I can afford?!? ”Jeter.” Wait a second - “Scott Hatteberg?”

RICK PETERSON
Red Sox catcher. He went on the DL with a ruptured elbow nerve. He had surgery but can't throw. He's done.

PAUL
Too bad. Hatteberg knows how to draw a walk. He once had 18 walks in just 30 games.

BILLY
My whole career I had 20 walks.

PAUL
Um, 11, actually.

BILLY
(Going down the list)
"Rodriguez...White" I can't afford any of these guys. Except Hatteberg - they all make millions, he's lucky to get 500 grand.

ART HOWE
Hatteberg doesn't belong with them. He's just a .270 hitter.

PAUL
He only played 94 games because of his injury. I projected his numbers for all 162 games. When you include walks, Hatteberg would have got on base *more* than anyone in baseball.

Hearing that stirs something in Billy. He grins at his staff.

BILLY
Can anyone beat that?

INT. WEIGHT ROOM, A'S STADIUM - AFTERNOON

The weight room is in the bowels of the stadium, across from the locker room, and is just as humble - crammed with ancient Nautilus machines and old-fashioned dumbbell weights. Billy works out. The Coaches (who all need it) stand and watch him.

ART HOWE
So Hatteberg gets on base a lot - we need a *power* guy. Giambi hit 38 homers. Hatteberg had what? Ten?

Billy SLAMS the weight down, grabs his list. Smacks a name.

BILLY
Dave Justice, New York Yankees - another piece of Giambi.

ART HOWE
We'll never get him. He's a 3-time All-Star, been in 6 World Series.

BILLY
He's also 36. Last time Justice made All-Star was 5 years ago. I couldn't afford the 1997 Justice, but I can get him used. He hit 41 homers in 2000 but only 18 last year, none in post-season.

ART HOWE
Then why do we want him?

BILLY
The Yankees look at Justice and only see he's old and losing power. But baseball is a game of skill. I will bet Justice *retains* his skills, even as he ages. If I'm right, he should still hit homers - enough for us, at least.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Everyone crammed in a small room again. The TV plays CNN. Lots of books on shelves. Two boards on a wall: one has all A's players, one has names of all players on the other teams.

ART HOWE
This guy for walks, that guy for power. It's crazy. We need a god damn first baseman! Justice plays left and Hatteberg is a catcher. A *broken-down* catcher! Can't even throw the ball back to the pitcher.
(Points to Billy's list)
We need real players. Guys you take one look at and know they can play.

Beat. Billy ponders the names on the board. Finally -

BILLY
There's one player I could get. You'd love him, Art. You all would. Every team is after this guy.

INTERCUT - BASEBALL DIAMOND, BATTER'S BOX - F/X SHOT

A PLAYER walks up to hit, head down, focused, his body looks just as impressive as Billy describes.

BILLY (V.O.)
He's young, big - looks like he'll hit a ton of homers. He hit .500 in high school, made him a first round draft pick. Think you want him?

ART HOWE (V.O.)
Hell, yes! Get him. Who is it?

As the Player steps into the box, he finally looks up: it's Billy at 17. We see the "BEANE" on the back of his jersey.

BILLY (V.O.)
It was me, Art. You'd hire me.

RESUME - BILLY'S OFFICE -

Billy stares down his coaching staff.

BILLY
We know how that turned out. I looked great. And I *sucked*. We stop making that mistake now.

INT. HATTEBERG LIVING ROOM, GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

SCOTT HATTEBERG, 33, helps his wife, BITSY, put decorations on their Christmas tree. Reaching for a branch, Scott WINCES. He rubs his elbow: there's a long scar from a recent surgery.

BITSY
Look at the time. Let's get to bed. The girls will be up in six hours.

Scott looks at the clock. It's 11:59 p.m. He can't turn away. He watches it as it switches from "11:59" to "12:00."

SCOTT
That's it. My contract just expired. My career is over.

BITSY
First, you don't know that. Second, even if it's true, and I'm not saying it is, there's a lot you can do besides baseball. Dad wants you - he says you're a natural salesman.

Scott says nothing. He stares at the clock, as if he could will time to move backwards when - **BRRING**! The phone RINGS. They exchange a worried look: who would call at this hour?

BITSY
Quick - before it wakes the girls.

SCOTT
(Lunges to pick up phone)
Hello?

BILLY (ON PHONE)
Scott, Billy Beane, Oakland A's. Sorry to call so late, but I wanted to talk as soon as you were available. I really want you on my team. I'll call your agent first thing tomorrow to make a deal.

SCOTT
That's Christmas.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - MIDNIGHT

Billy is on the phone, alone, at midnight. A killer smile.

BILLY
I hope he's Jewish. One more thing -

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY - M.O.S.

Scott takes a new first-baseman's glove out of a box. He tries it on, then nods to Bitsy, who stands at home plate with a bucket of balls and a tee, holding a bat uncertainly.

BILLY (V.O. - ON PHONE)
You'll be playing first.

She hits a ball off the tee. Scott fields it. Nearby, their daughters, ages 2 and 4, play on a blanket - until one starts to WAIL. Bitsy stops hitting to go over and solve the crisis.

Bitsy returns. She hits. Scott fields. Over and over, they keep at it, even as a gentle Washington rain starts to fall.

INT. LIVING ROOM, UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT, MANHATTAN - DAY

Luxurious. Park view. A MAID shows Billy and Paul in. Billy is finishing a hot dog from a street vendor. He's stuck with the wrapper. The Maid takes it. Billy also hands her a pass.

BILLY
If you're ever in Oakland. Good for two outfield plaza seats, any game.

MAID
Help yourself to anything.

She exits. Billy, thirsty from his hot dog, heads straight for the bar as Paul walks around, gawking.

PAUL
How's he keep this place so clean!

Billy opens the bar fridge, grabs a beer. Offers one to Paul.

PAUL
Not for me.

BILLY
They're cold.

PAUL
No, thanks.

BILLY
He's got Lite.

PAUL
I don't drink.
(Seeing Billy's disbelief)
I read an article in 8th grade on how alcohol kills off brain cells.

BILLY
Baseball, bad career choice. You need something to dull the pain.

Paul stops at a trophy case that takes up one whole wall. He stares at all the trophies, plaques, mementos and photos.

PAUL
We'll never get Justice.

BILLY
He's ours. I closed with Cashman an hour ago. It's a done deal.

PAUL
Only if Justice agrees. He has a "no trade" clause. He can stay put.

BILLY
That's why we're here.

Paul picks up a framed photo. Shows it to Billy.

PAUL
A guy who married Halle Berry won't want to end his career in Oakland.

JUSTICE (O.S.)
YO! PUT THAT DOWN.

DAVID JUSTICE, 6'3", 200 lbs., in workout shorts and no shirt - still in great shape at age 36. Flustered, Paul puts the picture back...knocking a trophy...catches it...rights it.

PAUL
Sorry. Oops!...Got it...We're good.

JUSTICE
Is he with you, Billy? What the hell you doing here anyway?

BILLY
I want you on my team.

JUSTICE
Screw you. I'm a Yankee.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE APARTMENT

Justice exits, heads to the elevator. Billy and Paul follow.

BILLY
I'm putting together a great team.

JUSTICE
Hell, you could bring back Reggie Jackson. I ain't playing for a team that bills their players for sodas.

PAUL
At cost! We don't make any profit.

JUSTICE
Your clubhouse is a dump. It's like some Army barracks.

BILLY
I'll get you your own chair. A Lay-Z-boy. A nice leather one.

JUSTICE
A chair! A chair's supposed to get me to leave all <u>this</u>?
(Points out the window)
For Oakland? *Oakland*!

BILLY
Okay, I'll comp you on the sodas.

Justice looks at him in disbelief, then gets in the elevator. Billy follows him in. Paul leaps in before the door closes.

INT. ELEVATOR - DESCENDING - CONTINUOUS

BILLY
You're right. We are a poor, small market team. But change is good. A player's first season with a new team is nothing but hope, promise, and good will. Change is *always* good. I'm offering you a change.

JUSTICE
Not interested.

INT. BASEMENT, APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The elevator opens. Justice exits, heading to the building's fancy basement gym. But Billy steps out and blocks his way.

BILLY
That's too bad. George hates you.

JUSTICE
Bullshit! He pays me $7 million.

BILLY
He has to, you have a contract. But when he looks at you, all he sees is a Rolls he bought that leaves oil stains on his garage floor. That's why he gave me $3 million to take you off his hands.

That finally gets Justice's attention.

BILLY
Yeah, they're actually paying you to play against them. That's how little the Yankees think of you. So you've got a choice - you can stay here in New York and enjoy your view of the Park. But you'll ride the bench all year, and then the Yankees will say they were right, that you've lost it. Or you can come to Oakland, play every day, and prove them all wrong. What's it going to be?

EXT. MAGNANTE HOME - NEW YEAR'S EVE - NIGHT

LOUD MUSIC. A raucous, informal party. NEIGHBORS drift in and out. As Billy's car pulls up with him and Paul inside we hear-

GRAHAM LUTZ (ON RADIO)
Billy Beane's latest blunder - signing Dave Justice. How old is Justice anyway? Eleven-ty?

CALLER BOB (ON RADIO)
Hatteberg proves Billy got hit in the head by a pitch too many times.

GRAHAM LUTZ (ON RADIO)
I doubt it - Billy was so bad even his head couldn't get a hit.

Billy SNAPS the radio off. He and Paul get out and go in.

INT. MAGNANTE HOUSE - NEW YEAR'S EVE - NIGHT - LATER -

Billy fights through the crowd, followed by Paul, to reach Magnante and Jill at the buffet - a long table covered with pizza, chips, and desserts. Billy hugs Jill hello.

BILLY
Hey, Mags, Jill. Happy New Year Great house! I'm sorry we're late. We came straight from the airport.

JILL
You made it, that's what counts. What can I get you to drink?

BILLY
Beer. And Fruit Punch for Paul.

PAUL
Soda is fine. Let me help you.

Paul goes off with Jill to get the drinks.

MAGNANTE
How's New York? We have a team yet?

BILLY
I'm getting there.

MAGNANTE
You do know spring training starts in a month.

BILLY
And you need to lose 10 pounds by then.

Billy snatches one of the pizza slices off Mags plate.

MAGNANTE
Billy, I paid for the pizza.

Billy begrudgingly hands him the slice back.

BILLY
Okay, but no dessert!

MAGNANTE
Hey, it's New Year's Eve.

BILLY
That won't cut it, Mags.

MAGNANTE
I'll go on a diet tomorrow, like everyone else in America.

BILLY
Tonight! This year you need to pitch better than you ever have.

MAGNANTE
Can't throw on an empty stomach.

Like a mischievous kid, Magnante takes a *third* slice. Billy snatches it from his hand and *throws it at the* wall - **SPLAAT!**

BILLY
TEN POUNDS! I MEAN IT!

Jill and Paul return with drinks in time to see this. A few party GUESTS look over. Billy mumbles an "I'm sorry" to Jill and quickly walks outside.

EXT. PORCH, MAGNANTE HOME - NIGHT

The party is inside. Billy sits on the porch. Magnante comes out with two beers. Hands Billy one. Shows Billy his label.

MAGNANTE
Lite. 110 calories.
(Both take a drink. Then-)
What is wrong with you?

BILLY
I need this season to work.

MAGNANTE
So you take it out on me.

BILLY
I'm counting on you to anchor the pen. Bradford is a rookie, he may crumble under pressure. And I had to trade Holtz to pay for Justice.

MAGNANTE
What! How could you do trade Holtz?

BILLY
It's my job. Holtz wasn't getting it done. And he cost a lot.

MAGNANTE
Holtz gave everything. He threw so hard he'd piss blood after a game. You have to keep a guy like that.

BILLY
He's just a player. I can't afford to be emotional about these decisions. I have to be objective. My players taught me that. I never had one stay because he liked me.
(Beat)
Don't worry, Mags. You're safe.

MAGNANTE
Glad to hear it. So is the bank that owns my mortgage.
(Clinks Billy's beer)
Happy New year, Billy.

Billy turns. Through a window behind Mags: Lauren, inside.

BILLY
You could've told me you invited her.

MAGNANTE
You should've known. She was Jill's freshman roommate. She's who
(MORE)

MAGNANTE (cont'd)
introduced us. And we like her more than you.
(Nods - "Give it a shot")
Just don't throw any food at her.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MAGNANTE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Billy enters from the porch. Sees Lauren is alone. Goes up to her. A moment as they regard each other. Billy smiles.

BILLY
Hey.

LAUREN
Hey.

BILLY
You found a new place?

LAUREN
Yeah. In the city. It's nice.

Just then, TOM, a good-looking guy dressed all in Ralph Lauren casual, comes up. He hands Lauren a drink.

TOM
Here you go, hon. Hey, I'm Tom.

BILLY
Billy.

TOM
Oh.

Never has so little said so much. An awkward pause.

TOM
I'll go eat. Let you two catch up.

He hurries off. Billy nods at him.

BILLY
Seems like a nice guy.

LAUREN
Yes, very. And he *loves* his job.

BILLY
Professional polo player?

LAUREN
Manages a hedge fund. They're underwriting the Magritte show.

BILLY
Hey, I'd be happy, too, if I could make 30 million a year spending other people's money.
(Beat)
Sorry I didn't call. After that dinner. I've been on the road.

LAUREN
Oh, please! I've seen you track down a three-armed 2nd baseman in Mongolia. That's not why.

BILLY
Yeah, I know. I didn't call because-
(Takes a moment)
I can't blame you. For moving on. I'm useless until I make this work.

LAUREN
Billy, I just hope you know success when you find it.

Billy sadly watches her walk over and rejoin Tom.

EXT. PAGANO BASEBALL FACILITY, PHOENIX, AZ - DAY

A sign: "HOME OF OAKLAND ATHLETICS SPRING TRAINING." Red-clay foothills and 15-ft cacti surround beautiful playing fields. Billy, with Taggert at his feet, and Paul watch the A's warm-up from the dugout. Art enters. Billy waves at the players.

BILLY
There's your team, Art. What do you think of them?

ART HOWE
I think you took everyone's cast-offs, throwaways, and markdowns and are hoping for a miracle.

ANGLE ON - Justice, in left, by himself, aloof and distant.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
You put a bitter old man in left.

- FLASH INTERCUT: Justice arriving at a hotel in Oakland. He looks up at it: He's sure as hell not in New York anymore.

ANGLE ON - A dozen TEENAGE GIRLS sit behind third squealing ever time good-looking ERIC CHAVEZ, 23, makes any play.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
You rush Chavez, who's only in his second year, into playing third.

- FLASH INTERCUT: Chavez plays a PlayStation baseball game in his apartment. Clothes, trash and equipment are everywhere.

Chavez throws to MIGUEL TEJADA, a 5'9", pudgy shortstop.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Tejada can field, but he's Mr. Swing-At-Everything at the plate.

- FLASH INTERCUT: Tejada at the Hilton's breakfast buffet, piles on more food than Billy, and eats twice as fast.

Tejada throws to a gray-haired RANDY VELARDE, 40, at second.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Velarde is practically my age.

- FLASH INTERCUT: Velarde at a sink applying Grecian Formula.

ANGLE ON - The pitching mounds. BARRY ZITO, a tall, surfer dude with shoulder length brown hair, throws off a mound.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Our best starter is a space case.

- FLASH INTERCUT: Zito unpacks 22 stuffed animals onto a bed.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
He takes stuffed animals on the road, for Chris'sake.

BILLY (O.S.)
Z won 17 games last year. I'd let him sleep with Taggert if he asked.

Catching Zito is RAMON HERNANDEZ, built like a fire hydrant.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Ramon is slow and can't pull the ball to save his life.

FLASH INTERCUT: Ramon races against his *very* pregnant wife in a game at a family picnic. Ramon comes in third.

On the mounds next to Zito is Magnante and Chad.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Chad - hell, *look* at him! And Mags has been around too long to fool anyone with anything anymore.

RESUME - DUGOUT

Magnante looks back at Billy. He rotates his left arm in an arc, give Billy an "I'm OK" sign. Billy waves, turns to Art.

BILLY
Forget how they look, Art. Focus on what they *do* to help us win.

ART HOWE
For us to win, EVERY guy out there has to play better than he ever has. What are the odds 25 players will have a "career best year" the same season?

PAUL
37 million to one.
(Art stares at him)
That's a guess - don't hold me to it. I'd have to run the numbers

ART HOWE
The only bright spot is Pena.

ANGLE ON - FIRST BASE -

Washington hits balls at CARLOS PENA, 20, as Scott watches.

Pena fields everything with ease - a pop up, a one-hopper, a dribbler up the line, a super hard line drive.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
Look at him! Pena is a natural.

Pena and Scott switch places. Now Scott plays first.

F/X SHOT - SPLIT SCREEN - PENA AND SCOTT, SIDE BY SIDE

On the left: the shots of Pena fielding. On the right: Scott fielding the *same exact* balls. But Scott is a disaster. He can't get the foot work, misses more than he catches.

BILLY (O.S.)
He is. But Scott starts at first.

ART HOWE (O.S.)
WHAT?! I've seen brick walls move better.

RESUME - DUGOUT -

ART HOWE
I won't play Scott if I KNOW, in advance, he'll screw up.

BILLY
I ran the numbers, Art. It'll work.

ART HOWE
You *want* your numbers to work. <u>You don't know they will</u>. Admit it. They're all has-beens and never-weres! Every one of these guys is on this team for one reason, and one reason only - they're *cheap*!

BILLY
<u>Undervalued</u>. There's a difference.
(Beat)
I need Hatty in the line-up to create runs. First base is the only position where he won't have to throw much. I can hide him there. Scott starts at first.

Just then, Scott manages to snag a hard one-hopper.

BILLY
SCOTT HATTEBERG, PICKIN' MACHINE!

Art and Paul look at Billy. So does Scott.

Suddenly, the next ball comes at right at Scott, fast. Scott, with no time to think, fields this one easily.

BILLY
YES! PICKIN' MACHINE!

<u>For the first time, Scott smiles</u> - maybe he *can* do this. The next ball, Scott snags, more confident. Billy turns to Art.

BILLY
Hatty doesn't need to *be* a first baseman. For now, he just needs to *believe* he can play first.
(To Scott, yelling)
WHO'S A PICKIN' MACHINE!?

Of course, Scott misses the next ball. Misses it badly.

BILLY
Okay, not now, but soon.

When The P.A. announces the starting line-ups, Billy turns and walks off. Billy never looks back. He passes Paul.

PAUL
You're leaving? Now? It's starting.

BILLY
I never watch games live. Only on tape, after they're finished.

Billy keeps walking. A very confused Paul goes after him.

PAUL
You realize that makes no sense-

Suddenly, Wolf appears, blocking Paul's pursuit of Billy.

WOLF
You won't change his mind.

PAUL
It's their first game. Our first chance to evaluate them as a team.

WOLF
The day you were born I'd been evaluating players for 20 years. I scout a guy who has it all, he's a "5-tool player." A top prospect is a "premium guy."
(Nods Billy's direction)
Billy was a *premium* "premium guy."

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - MOVING - BILLY P.O.V. [1980]

Billy, age 17, walks down the hall. Billy's P.O.V of hall: awed FRESHMEN BOYS watch him pass. A TEACHER hands him his report back, an "A." CHEERLEADERS offer flirtatious smiles.

WOLF (V.O.)
Smart, popular, dated the prettiest girls. He was this Jock-God.

INT. VISITOR'S CLUBHOUSE, JACK MURPHY STADIUM - DAY [1980]

Wolf ushers Billy in: Blondie's *Call Me* blares, there are

TV's, video games, buffet, and free equipment. NEW YORK METS, real pro players, greet Billy as one of their own.

WOLF (V.O.)
Every team wanted him.

Manager JOE TORRE exits his office to shake Billy's hand.

JOE TORRE
You'd be real happy here, Billy. We all expect great things from you.

Torre nods to Wolf who hands Billy a Mets jersey: "BEANE" and "1" is on the back. Billy stares - *his* name on a pro jersey.

EXT. FIELD, JACK MURPHY STADIUM - METS PRE-GAME DRILLS - DAY

Billy, in the jersey, stands on the field as a 360-degree pan takes in all he sees: the huge ballpark, fans arriving, a sea of green grass, the camaraderie of men at play. It's magical.

WOLF (V.O.)
I'd drive 60,000 miles in 4 months, stay in crappy motels and eat crap meals, so I can sit on a hard plank to watch 200 games and I don't know how many players for one reason. A hope. That I'd find The One. The One who would do great things.

Batting practice ends. As the Mets walk off, Wolf hands Billy a bat, urging him to take a few swings. Billy steps into the batter's box. The PITCHER throws.

WOLF (V.O.)
Maybe even change the game forever.

CRACK! Billy sends the ball into the highest deck. Billy hits the ball so high and so far that *everyone*, even the Mets players, stop to watch its flight, in awe. *Who is that?*

WOLF (V.O.)
I convinced the Mets to make Billy their first round draft pick - easiest job I ever had in baseball.

INT. BEANE HOME - DAY - P.O.V. MOVES THROUGH HOUSE

Military middle class: tiny living room, ancient fridge, den full of baseball trophies. Billy is on the phone, but stares at an acceptance letter from Stanford University in his hand.

WOLF (V.O.)
The hard part was convincing Billy. He wanted to go to college.

Biggest decision of Billy's life. He looks up, searching for some sign, anything, to help him decide. Billy finds it: he sees something off-screen that makes him *tear up the letter*.

WOLF (V.O.)
So we threw money at him. Enough to make him turn down a full ride to Stanford.

EXT. LYNCHBURG STADIUM

Billy swings at a high pitch, twisting himself. STRIKE 3!

WOLF (V.O.)
But, from the start, Billy believed he should get a hit every time up.

Returning to the dugout, Billy DESTROYS a water cooler with his bat. His rage is **raw**, *scary*. His Coaches and teammates watch Billy self-destruct, worried, concerned and afraid.

WOLF (V.O.)
The best baseball teams lose 60 games. A good hitter - hell, a Hall of Famer - fails 2 out of 3 times.

EXT. FIELD, PAGANO PARK - GAME - OVERHEAD P.O.V.

The A's and Red Sox spring training game. START ON: Tejada fields a ball hit by a RED SOX and throws to Scott at first, who catches it, but his foot is off the bag. Safe! PAN UP: Across the stands, soar over the top of the stadium.

WOLF (V.O.)
That's why he has to drive around, or work out in a gym, during games.

PAN DOWN TO: A lone car, driving around and around the park.

WOLF (V.O.)
Why he has to watch games on tape, and only if he *knows* the outcome.

MOVE IN ON - The car: Billy drives, alone. Unable to watch.

WOLF (V.O.)
Billy has a hard time with failure.

EXT. FIELD, PAGANO PARK - END OF DAY - DUSK

Red Sox fielder Johnny Damon catches Justice's fly to end the game. Red Sox run in, slapping high-fives, as the A's trudge off, heads down. PAN TO - Scoreboard: Red Sox - 11, A's - 0.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE LOCKER ROOMS - AFTER THE GAME - DAY

Billy heads for the A's locker room just as John Henry exits the Red Sox locker room. A moment as they regard each other.

JOHN HENRY
That team will win more games than anyone?! Not this year, Billy.

BILLY
Spring training games don't mean a thing. Wait til the season starts.

JOHN HENRY
If I was you, I'd try to get Opening Day moved to August.

BILLY
We'll do fine. You'll see. How'd you make your money, Mr. Henry?

JOHN HENRY
I'm a commodities trader.

BILLY
That's your job. The way you made money was you looked at raw data and let it tell you what had value. You knew that numbers don't lie.
(Beat)
I'm doing the same thing, except with ball players.

Billy goes in the A's locker room leaving John Henry behind.

INT. A'S LOCKER ROOM - SPRING TRAINING - CONTINUOUS

Billy walks up to Paul. They stand near where players exit the showers, towels around waists. The A's players emerge from the steam like aliens off a space ship:

Zito's face hidden by long wet hair; a gray-haired Velarde, Scott gingerly holding his elbow; tall, skinny Chad; pudgy Miguel; and, lastly, a pitcher with a club foot.

BILLY
They there are, in the flesh.

PAUL
They could be the best thing to happen to baseball.

BILLY
Or the worst. We'll find out.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Bunting and a huge sign: "WELCOME TO OPENING DAY OAKLAND A'S 2002 SEASON." FANS stream in as VENDORS solicit them.

- Rorich and his WIFE entertain corporate bigwigs in his box.

- Lauren sits with Jill in the "Players' Wives" section.

- On the field, the A's and the Texas Rangers, their Opening Day opponents, stretch, warm-up, run sprints, and toss.

- Wolf, in his front row seat, chats with Washington.

- A Hall of Fame A'S PLAYER throws out the first ball.

INT. BOX SUITE LEVEL, ENTRANCE TO PRESS BOX - DAY

Packed! 6 Bay Area papers, 4 local TV stations, and stringers in long rows, typing on laptops. Seeing Billy pass, Graham Lutz uses his cigarette to point at the A's on the field.

GRAHAM LUTZ
Hey, Billy - I'm still available.

The REPORTERS laugh. Billy turns to get away, but sees -

ANGLE ON - OWNER'S BOX - BILLY'S P.O.V.

How the other half lives: Rorich, his wife and GUESTS enjoy a catered champagne brunch. A GUEST, a bit drunk, goes up to Rorich and points to half-filled bleachers in right field.

GUEST
Not your best investment, Roy.

Roy looks at the empty seats. Turns. He and Billy lock eyes.

RESUME - BILLY

Paul walks up to Billy. Hands him a line-up card.

PAUL
Art's starting line-up.

Billy's face darkens. He turns on a heel and stomps off.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Billy, trailed by Paul, strides through the ***worst*** clubhouse in pro ball, by any measure: worn green carpet on a concrete floor; fluorescent lights; dull ballot booth-like lockers; trash cans full of broken bats. Billy continues out the back door and up the tunnel that leads to...

INT. A'S DUGOUT - OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

Paul stops in the area behind the home plate backstop, next to the dugout. But Billy keeps going. He marches up to Art, sitting on the bench. The A's PLAYERS, about to start, are shocked to see Billy, in street clothes, here in the dugout.

BILLY
I told you to start Hatty at first.

The players look at Scott, who doesn't like the attention.

ART HOWE
And I told you he's not ready.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, Billy!

ART HOWE
It's my call. Pena starts.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Billy!

Billy won't be distracted, he stays focused on Art.

BILLY
I need Scott at bat today.

ART HOWE
I'm in charge down here.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
HEY, BILLY! LOOK AT ME!

BILLY
WHAT?

Billy spins to find: THE UMPIRE. He's who's been yelling.

UMPIRE
You can't be here. You know that. Rule 3.15 - only uniformed players, and coaches in the dugout. Get out.

Art waves "Bye-bye" to Billy, like Fernando Rey to Gene Hackman in *The French Connection*. Billy is too irate to move.

UMPIRE
If you don't go, I'll have to fine you. You don't make that much.

Billy doesn't want to go. But has to. Leans in, to Art.

BILLY
Bring Chad in early, not late. I don't want to blow Zito's arm. Don't screw up. Use Chad early!

P. A. ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Ladies and Gentlemen, <u>your</u> OAKLAND <u>AAAAAAAAAAA</u>'s!

The FANS cheer as the A's run onto the field. Billy stomps out of the dugout. He *keeps* walking away, never looking back.

EXT. BEHIND HOME PLATE BACKSTOP, TUNNEL TO CLUBHOUSE

As he stalks off, Billy looks up: he spots Lauren, with Jill. Billy smiles sadly, then disappears into the tunnel.

Paul, left behind, sees Pena at first. Turns to the dugout: Scott is stuck on the bench. Art sits at the far end.

EXT. FIELD, A'S STADIUM

- Justice hits a homer with Tejada on first. A's up 2-0.

- Later: Pena catches a line drive at first to make an out. ANGLE ON: Scott, on the bench, watching Pena make the play.

- Later: Zito gets a strike-out to end the 6th. A's 3-0. ANGLE ON: Chad, in the bullpen, looks up to see the score.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - LATER

Billy, in work-out clothes, lifts weights. Paul enters.

PAUL
Would it kill you to watch a game?

BILLY
Not me. But I could take out innocent bystanders if they lose.

PAUL
It's safe. Zito is up 4-0 after 8.

Billy **SLAMS** his weight down with a resounding **CLASH.**

BILLY
SHIT! Zito is *still* out there?!

PAUL
He's only thrown 102 pitches.

BILLY
Call Art. I want Chad in. NOW.

EXT. FIELD, OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

Zito's first pitch of the ninth. The batter hits it to left. Justice is slow. A ball he could catch sails over the fence.

ALEX "A-ROD" RODRIGUEZ, Texas's best hitter, goes up to hit. In the dugout, Art hangs up the phone. Turns to Washington.

ART HOWE
Billy wants me to hand the game over to that freak show.

Beat. Finally, Art heads toward the mound. He taps his right arm as he goes. Gives one last look back at Washington.

ART HOWE
We'll see about this one.

EXT. THE BULLPEN

The gates open. Chad emerges. Looks out: it's overwhelming! 50,000 people staring at him. Chad goes to the mound. He walks like a man doing his best to disappear.

P. A. ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Now pitching for the Oakland A's, making his major league debut, Number 53 - CHADDDD BRADDFORDDD.

ANGLE ON - PITCHING MOUND

When Chad arrives, Art hands him a ball.

ART HOWE
Show me what you've got, kid.

CHAD
Yes, sir, I will. Thank you, sir.

Art walks off. Chad starts to throw his odd warm up pitches.

INT. PRESS BOX -

Two REPORTERS use the pitching change to get coffee. But seeing Chad, they stop, mid-pour, to stare in amazement.

REPORTER
Ever see anything like that before?

REPORTER 2
Once. At the circus. Same guy would stick a needle through his arm.

EXT. COLISEUM - STANDS - VARIOUS SHOTS

Throughout the stadium, fans react. They point and jeer. Some jokingly imitate his odd motion. Mostly, they LAUGH.

EXT. FIELD - HOME PLATE AND PITCHER'S MOUND

Chad can see some fans laughing at him. He drops his head down, looking at his feet. He never looks up again.

Rodriguez steps into the box, a hitter ready to do damage. Chad throws his bizarre pitch - ZIPP! "STRIKE ONE!"

A-Rod steps out. Eyes Chad like he's on *Punk'd*. Steps in.

Chad pitches. A-Rod swings and makes contact, but it looks accidental. A-Rod dashes for first, at full speed.

Chavez scoops up Rodriguez's slow roller. He tags third for the force out, then throws to second -

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)
A-Rod makes contact! Not well hit.
Chavez has it. Tags third. Throws -

INT. BILLY'S CAR - CIRCLING STADIUM - DAY

Billy is in his car, driving around the stadium. Hearing a ROAR from the crowd, he turns on his radio.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER
IN TIME! Bradford gets Rodriguez to hit into a game-ending double-play. The A's open the season with a win.

INT. FIELD, A'S STADIUM

The A's gather around Chad, congratulating him. Chad looks down the entire time, even as he walks off the field.

INT. CLUBHOUSE

Lots of happy SHOUTS, horseplay, laughter and MUSIC. Billy enters. He blows past everyone, even Mags, with a grim look.

JUSTICE
Does Billy know we won?

MAGNANTE
That's the way he always is.

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE

Less personality than a high school guidance counselor's: a few framed photos on the wall. Billy stops at the door. Wolf and Washington sit with Art at his desk. They look up.

ART HOWE
You happy now, Billy?

BILLY
No, I'm not. You didn't start Scott. You left Zito in too long. You did everything wrong.

ART HOWE
Wrong? We won. You do your job, I'll do mine.

BILLY
THIS <u>IS</u> MY JOB, GOD DAMN IT!

<u>Billy throws a chair at the wall behind Art</u> - **CRASH**! The chair literally disintegrates, making a hole in the wall.

On the **CRASH**, everything freezes. The Players stare at Billy.

Billy glares at each one - Justice, Chad, Tejada, and Scott.

Billy stomps out. Leaving a charged silence in his wake.

INT. EQUIPMENT ROOM, A'S CLUBHOUSE - DAY

A caged room full of equipment: balls, bats, helmets, hats, and uniforms. Veteran Equipment Manager, STEVE "VOOS" VUCINICH works inside when Velarde appears at the open door.

VELARDE
I need eye black, Voos.

VOOS
Won't hide the wrinkles, V.

He hands him a jar to Velarde, who laughs. The phone RINGS.

VOOS
Equipment room...Hey, Billy...
Really?...Okay, sure, right away.

He hangs up. Voos exits the equipment room, we GO WITH HIM...

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE - NEXT DAY

...into the locker area. Players, including Justice, Scott, Tejada, are in various stages of arrival: they study tapes, read fan mail, sign baseballs, or put on their uniform.

But when Voos go to Pena's locker, they fall silent. They watch him empty it with quick efficiency - Voos has done this before. Last thing: he removes the "PENA" nameplate.

The players study the bare locker. Billy's message is clear.

Voos walks out...passing Billy in the door. He looks at Art.

BILLY
Now you have to start Scott.

ART HOWE
How could you trade Pena?! He could've been Rookie of the Year.

BILLY
He still could be - for Detroit.
(Stares down the players)
Have a good game.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM - NIGHT

A half-filled stadium. The spotty crowd stands for the National Anthem. As it ends, the A's run out on the field.

PUBLIC ADDRESS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Here they are - *your* Oakland A'S!!!

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S BOX -

Paul leans forward, concerned: no one is playing first.

INT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM - NIGHT

Scott emerges from the dugout. He jogs to first. Scott slows as he nears the base, approaching it like it was radioactive. He takes his position, but looks uncertain and ill-at-ease.

The game starts. The first pitch is hit right to Scott. You see panic in his eyes. Scott *misses* it! Runner is safe.

Scott sees Zito, Chavez and Tejada look at him with doubt. Tejada covers his mouth with his glove and turns to Chavez.

TEJADA
Billy Beane, he crazy.

Scott heard, but pretends he didn't. He pounds his glove and looks at his feet - anything to avoid his teammates' gaze.

INT. DUGOUT - END OF INNING

Inning finally over. The A's come in and sit on the bench. Scott ends up all alone at the far end. He looks over and sees Tejada and Chavez talk to Art. He knows it's about him.

SCOTT
This is when one of you says,
"Scott, you're doing great."

Their silence speaks volumes. Scott's head sinks, gloomy.

EXT. A'S STADIUM, FIELD - LATER

Magnante comes in to relieve in the 7th. First batter he faces is DAVID ORTIZ. Magnante throws. Ortiz hits Magnante's first pitch out of the park for a home run.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE - AFTER THE GAME

Players change. Billy enters. Heads straight for Magnante.

BILLY
What the hell were *you* thinking?

MAGNANTE
Where to eat after the game. You want to go to the Beef and Brew?

BILLY
You threw an inside fastball to Ortiz - AN INSIDE FASTBALL HITTER!

His anger catches Magnante off-guard. He sees the other players looking over. Magnante pleads his case, quietly.

MAGNANTE
I hit my spot. Ortiz got lucky.

BILLY
No such thing as luck. Your old tricks won't cut it any more.

MAGNANTE
It's not all me. We had no offense.

BILLY
We lost by *one* run. You gave up *one* run. You threw junk. You didn't fool anyone but yourself today.

ANGLE ON - JUSTICE

Watching Billy berate Mags, he shakes his head. Hears a HISS.

CHAD (O.S.)
Dave! Dave!

Justice looks around: Chad is *hiding* in his locker, pressed up against a side, using his clothes as a cover. He whispers.

CHAD
Billy still here?

Justice turns: Billy finishes with Mags and walks out.

JUSTICE
Naw, man, just left.

Chad exits his locker, relieved. Sees Justice eyeballing him.

CHAD
I gave up a run, too.

JUSTICE
Shit, Rook, what's the worst he can do? You're *already* in Oakland.

EXT. A'S STADIUM, PARKING LOT - "GETAWAY DAY" - DAY

"Getaway Day": The A's leave for a road trip right after a day home game. WIVES and GIRLFRIENDS say goodbye as players board the bus for the airport. Scott kisses Bitsy goodbye.

BITSY
It's only a 12-game road trip.

SCOTT
Giving fans in four cities a chance to see how bad I am in person.

BITSY
Dad says his offer is always open.

SCOTT
(Getting on the bus)
Tell him I'm considering it.

EXT. VARIOUS FIELDS - DAY AND NIGHT - "LOSING MONTAGE"

DETROIT: A fly to left drops in front of a too-slow Justice.

- Billy's Office. Billy sits glaring at his door. Hanging on it, in his face all day, is a chart of AL WEST standings: The A's are 3rd, 7 games out of 1st place.

MILWAUKEE: Tejada swings wildly at a high pitch. Strike 3!

- Billy looks at the standings: A's in 3rd, now 8 games out.

YANKEE STADIUM, VISITOR CLUBHOUSE: *A 4-star hotel!* Leather sofas, big TV's, delicious buffet. As the A's enter, each player stops short, taking it in with envy. Then goes to his locker and unpacks. But not Chad. Chad slowly turns, gaping in disbelief...until he realizes he's in Justice's way.

CHAD
Oh, sorry, Dave - but *look* at this! And it's the *Visitor's* clubhouse!

JUSTICE
Damn it, Rook, this is how the majors are *supposed* to be!

KANSAS CITY: Royals runner on 3rd. He takes off for home *just* as Magnante throws his pitch.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
It's a suicide squeeze!

The Royals batter *BUNTS* toward first. Scott charges the ball. As the runner from 3rd heads into home, Scott throws to Ramon - too HIGH! The ball goes to the backstop. The runner scores!

BACK IN OAKLAND: Billy stands at his office window looking at a half-empty parking lot. Very few FANS come to the game.

CUT TO: Art Howe, looking dour, in a post-game interview.

GRAHAM LUTZ
The team is clearly struggling right now, Art. What would you say is your biggest problem?

Art hesitates. We know what he'd like to say. He doesn't.

ART HOWE
We're playing as well as we can given the players we've got.

PAN OUT FROM TV TO: INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy, Paul and Wolf watch Art on TV. Billy snaps it off.

WOLF
You know he's right. You shouldn't play Scott until he's ready.

PAUL
We need his bat in the line-up now.

BILLY
I can't put him at DH, he's got no power. So he has to play.

WOLF
You got him learning how to play first at the major league level by playing first at the major league level. It's doing a lot of damage.

PAUL
If that's all it takes, then Hatty shouldn't be in the majors.

WOLF
Coming from a guy who never played *one* goddamn day! You try it.
(To Billy)
You're making Hatty look like a fool, in public, every day. Not just him. All of them. You're humiliating them. It has to stop.

BILLY
It will when they start winning.

WOLF
(Points to names on board)
You can't win with them. You only hired players who went to college. No high school phenoms. No first round pick. Not one guy every team went after.
(Turns to Billy)
No "Billy Beane." That's all you cared about. So you missed out on a lot of good guys.

PAUL
We were objective. About everyone. That's the team it got us.

WOLF
It's *not* a team! They're lab rats. To test your cockamamie ideas.

BILLY
I hired the players with the best numbers. It's that simple.

Beat. Wolf stares at Billy, realizing. Points at Paul.

WOLF
You think all you need is this punk kid and his goddamn laptop full of stats. I've been in the game 50 years. I know a good ball player the instant I see one. You never forget that feeling. When you finally find him.
(Right at Billy)
The One you can dream on.

BILLY
That guy, Wolf - he doesn't exist.
He never did.

Long beat. Wolf knows what that means.

WOLF
If you believe that, you don't need
me anymore. Do you, Billy?

Silence. Billy is reluctant to answer. But he answered anyway. Refusing to show his hurt, Wolf goes to the door.

WOLF
I'm the reason you got to play.
Then I gave you a chance to scout
when everyone else had written you
off. I showed you the ropes, taught
you everything I knew. Every step,
I was there, helping you.
(Beat)
You're goddamn welcome.

They hold a look. Wolf walks away. From the game he loves.

Billy sits there, devastated, when he hears...LAUGHTER. It seems to taunt him. It's coming from outside. Billy stands and goes to his window.

EXT. PLAYER'S ENTRANCE, COLISEUM - BILLY' S P.O.V.

Tejada, Justice and Magnante are LAUGHING hard at something as they arrive for today's game. Their laughter is cut off by-

BILLY (O.S.)
LOSING SHOULDN'T BE FUN.

They stop, look around. It takes them a minute to spot Billy: Billy hangs out his office window, SCREAMING at them, crazed.

BILLY
IT'S NOT FUN FOR ME. IF I'M GOING
TO BE THIS MISERABLE, YOU'RE GOING
TO BE MISERABLE.

Tejada, Justice and Magnante share a look: Is this guy nuts? Billy goes back in, SLAMMING his window shut. Through it, they see him yank out his game tape and HURL it at the wall.

JUSTICE
We got a lunatic in charge. His
crazy ass is why we're losing.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Picking up his cracked VHS tape puts Billy eye to eye with the standings: The A's are tied for last place, 10 games out.

His cellphone **RINGS**. Billy sees who's calling: "RORICH."

INT. HOTEL ROOM, MARK HOPKINS HOTEL - DAY

Spectacular view. Billy stands by as Rorich puts on a tuxedo for a charity gala in front of a full-length mirror.

RORICH
Now I have to pay off Wolf's contract, pay him to *not* work. We are 19 and 27 - eight games under .500. In last place. Attendance is down, TV ad time isn't selling. I am *losing* money. What would you do if you were me?

BILLY
I'd wait. A 5 or 6 game win streak and we're back in it.

RORICH
How? We're 10 games out of first.

BILLY
We have time. Season isn't half over. We'll be in 1st by September.

RORICH
I expected more from you by now.

BILLY
You and everyone else, Roy.

RORICH
I talked to some other owners. They all agree. What you're doing will *never* work.

BILLY
They want you to lose, Roy.

Rorich turns to face him. Now in his tux, he's impressive.

RORICH
The hardest thing to do in business is cut your losses.

It hits Billy: Rorich is going to fire him. It's over.

BILLY
This team is not a "loss."

RORICH
No, they're a joke. *You're* a joke. Everyone is laughing at you.

BILLY
They'll stop if you give me time. You don't sell a house when you've only done the foundation. You finish it. The team was built on probability. All the probabilities of winning are based on *162 games*.

RORICH
I can't afford to wait that long.

BILLY
You have to! Chance, injuries, accidents - hell, bad luck - will make us lose games. But over 162 games this team will win more than anyone. You have to give me time.

RORICH
I need to see some results soon.

BILLY
I need at least 120 games.

RORICH
That's not until August!

BILLY
We should be in first by then.

RORICH
I won't wait that long.

BILLY
Give me to the All-Star break by then we should be -

RORICH
(Cutting him off)
I'll give you two weeks to get to .500. That's 14 games. Win 11 of them and we'll be at 30 wins, 30 losses. If you can't do that - I say goodbye, find someone else.

INT. MEN'S ROOM, A'S OFFICES

Paul stands at a urinal. Billy enters. Goes up to him.

BILLY
What are you doing?

PAUL
(Suddenly uncertain)
Um, peeing?

BILLY
Hurry up. We've got work to do.

Billy exits. Paul hurriedly finishes, flushes, and follows.

INT. HALLWAY, A'S EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Paul, still tucking his shirt in, catches up to Billy.

BILLY
Rorich gave me a deadline - two weeks to get to .500 or I'm fired.

PAUL
So much for job security.

BILLY
Ever think you'd miss Cleveland? We chose the right guys. We need to figure out why they aren't winning.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy and Paul sit at Paul's desk among stacks of stat sheets. His white board is covered with numbers and names. Paul stares at his laptop, blankly. They got no answer. Billy suddenly stands and walks out.

BILLY
Screw this. Come with me.

EXT. FIELD, A'S STADIUM - DAY

Dressed in work clothes, standing in center field of a totally empty field, Billy and Paul play catch.

PAUL
I don't see how this helps.

BILLY
Can't hurt. We weren't getting much accomplished inside.

PAUL
The thing is - we *should* be winning. Our numbers are right. We have the guys who can create runs.

BILLY
Yeah, if only they didn't keep getting out.

Billy doesn't catch Paul's next throw. He looks at Paul.

BILLY
We only focused on offense, run production. We ignored the other side - not getting out. The more we avoid making outs, the more chances we have to score.

PAUL
Conserving outs - I don't know, it seems too obvious.

BILLY
This is baseball. The obvious gets ignored all the time.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE, PRIOR TO GAME - DAY

The team, some in street clothes, some half in uniform, get ready for the game when they hear -

ART HOWE (O.S.)
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND?

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE.

Art sits at his desk, staring at Billy and Paul in disbelief.

ART HOWE
What the hell do you mean - "no more stealing?"

BILLY
It's too risky. We need to conserve our outs.

CHAVEZ
Risky! A steal puts a runner in scoring position.

BILLY
Not when he's out.

JUSTICE (O.S.)
Shit, man! We have to steal.

Billy turns. Justice and Tejada are at the door.

TEJADA
No steal! Es loco!

JUSTICE
Art knows what he's doing. Leave him alone. You wanna screw up your job, go ahead. We need to steal.

Billy sees a few more players gather behind Justice. Billy stands and moves out into the locker room to face them.

BILLY
You need to win. To do that, you have to avoid making outs. Treat outs like your children, cling to them. As long as we have one out left, *anything* can happen.
(Beat)
So, from now on, no more stealing.

The players **ROAR** in protest. Billy cuts them off with-

BILLY
Paul has the numbers.

He nods at Paul, trying to hide in the corner. Every player turns to stare at Paul. He clears his throat.

PAUL
Stealing only contributes to the offense when we...

INTERCUT - INFIELD, BASEBALL DIAMOND - F/X SHOT

TEN BASE RUNNERS in a row try to steal second. SEVEN are safe. All 7 stay at second, in a big group around the bag. THREE are thrown out and do a "walk of shame" off the field.

PAUL (V.O.)
...steal safely 70% of the time.

The three "out" Runners stop. They turn, waiting. Finally, one of the seven joins them. All four walk off the field.

PAUL (V.O.)
Our success rate is only 62%.

Suddenly, 10 NEW BASE RUNNERS appear and try to steal second. The group of Runners standing around second is now huge.

JUSTICE (V.O.)
So we should try to steal *more*.

TEJADA (V.O.)
Si! The more we try, the more we be safe.

Four of the new runners join the other four. They walk off.

PAUL (o.s.)
Probability doesn't work that way.

RESUME - A'S LOCKER ROOM

BILLY
I didn't hire any of you for your speed. Hell, we're the only team that needs a pinch runner for our lead-off man. So, no more stealing.
(Beat)
And a lot more patience at the plate. Only swing at *your* pitch. You will see one pitch in every at-bat you can hit - wait for it.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Billy is watching his game tape. Suddenly, he sits up.

BILLY
Paul! Come here, quick!

Paul hurries in. Billy, rewinding his tape , hits "Play." He points. ONSCREEN: Tejada holds up on the first pitch.

BILLY
First pitch. Tejada didn't swing.

The tape continues: Next pitch - Tejada swings wildly.

BILLY
Shit.

Tape continues: Chavez, on at first, steals second.

BILLY
GOD DAMN IT!

INT. CLUBHOUSE - AFTER THE GAME

Billy enters.. First player he spots is Tejada.

BILLY
Miggy, wait for you pitch. *Wait*!

Tejada mutters an oath in Spanish. Billy ignores him when he spots Chavez heading to the showers and goes after him.

BILLY
You stole a base!

CHAVEZ
Yeah, I know you said don't steal,
but I read the guy perfectly.

INT. SHOWERS

Chavez steps under the stream, turns: <u>Billy is next to him</u>. *He followed Chavez <u>into</u> the shower*. His own Norman Bates. Water splatters on Billy. Chavez is too surprised to talk.

BILLY
When I say don't steal, I mean it.

Justice, seeing this, defends Chavez as he walks past.

JUSTICE
Lay off him, Billy. His steal is
the only reason he scored.

INT. CLUBHOUSE

Billy, splattered, hounds Justice all the way to his locker.

BILLY
That's o*ne* run in <u>one</u> game!

Billy turns to the room, addressing all the players.

BILLY
You don't get it! What you're all
doing is playing black-jack and
hitting on 17. When you get a 4,
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
everyone, even the dealer tells you, “Nice hit.” It wasn’t. It was a *stupid* hit! You were <u>lucky</u>, not *smart*! Dumb luck won’t win tomorrow. Or the next day. Or the 100 games after that. To win consistently we have to play smart.

Billy exits. The players look at each other. HOLD ON: Scott.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE BILLY’S OFFICE - DAY

As Billy exits, Paul is waiting for him, with a stat sheet.

BILLY
We only lost 2-1 instead of 11-1. So far, it’s a huge success -

PAUL
Actually, it was. Opposing pitch count up, OPS up. No errors. They got two lucky hits. You have to look at the process, not results.

BILLY
Right now, it’s only about results.

PAUL
Rome wasn’t built in a day.

BILLY
Let’s hope it only took two weeks. Zito losing hurts. Now it’s win 11 of 13 games, or I’m out of here.

SCOTT (O.S.)
Hey, Billy.

They turn: Scott. It’s unclear how much of that he heard.

SCOTT
What you said - to win, we have to play smart. I think you’re right.
(Beat)
That’s why I want you to bench me.

BILLY
No way, Hatty. There’s different kinds of smart. You’re one of them.

SCOTT
I don’t. I lose them. I can’t take it anymore. I’m hurting the team.
(MORE)

SCOTT (cont'd)
Me at first will end up costing us 100 runs, easy.

PAUL
16.5, actually. 1 every 10 games.

BILLY
I can live with that, Scott.

SCOTT
With me giving up runs? I can't!

BILLY
I promise you, you can. Paul can explain it better than me.

PAUL
Your errors at first -

F/X SHOT: THE SCREEN SPLITS INTO SIXTEEN SMALLER SCREENS -

In each screen, Scott makes an error at first. Each error is different, but every one causes the A's to give up a run.

PAUL (O.S.)
They *will* cost us 16.5 runs.

- Each screen SPLITS into six smaller ones. In each of the 96 screens, Scott gets a hit, draws a walk, or drives in a run. It's a mind-boggling wall of offense.

PAUL (O.S.)
But *as a hitter* you make *six* runs for every one you give up.

- SIXTEEN of the "offense" screens go to black. The remaining 70 screens continue to show Scott's offense output.

PAUL (O.S.)
That's a net gain of 70 runs.

RESUME - HALLWAY

BILLY
70 runs wins us a lot of games.

SCOTT
Billy, I appreciate what you're doing, trying to support me. But I know you're pulling those numbers out of your ass.

BILLY
Actually, I pull them out of Paul's ass. It has to do with E.R.V.

Scott looks at Paul for an explanation.

PAUL
I superimpose a matrix on the field and assign an Expected Run Value, or ERV, to each point. With ERV I can measure anything - like the cost of you not making a catch.

SCOTT
Come on, you can't measure something that *doesn't happen*!

CUT TO - SCOTT PLAYING FIRST - F/X SHOT:

A ball shoots past Scott, two feet to his right. As it does, a grid is superimposed on the field. The point the ball hit lights up: **968**. Percentages appear by it.

PAUL (V.O.)
You can. You miss a ball that hits point 968. Ten years of data show 8,642 hits to point 968 - 92% go for a double, 4% a single. That gives it an ERV of .5 runs. So your error makes us give up half a run.

RESUME - HALLWAY

Scott looks at Billy and Paul, grins slightly.

SCOTT
You do know there is no such thing as *half* a run.

BILLY
There is now. Just go out and do what you do best - getting on base. And one other thing. Be sociable.

SCOTT
What?

BILLY
You're a smart guy, well-read. When a guy gets to first, talk to him. See what happens.

EXT. FIELD, OAKLAND COLISEUM - NIGHT

Scoreboard: Blue Jays Vs. A's. Bottom of 1st: 0-0. Blue Jays star RAUL MONDESI hits a single. He stands at 1st, stoic. Finally, Scott figures "What the hell" - he turns to Mondesi.

SCOTT
Hey, Mondy, who's harder to hit -
Mulder or Zito?

Silence. Mondesi seems to ignore him. Actually, he's thinking-

MONDESI
Zito. More bite on his curve.

SCOTT
Yeah. I'm glad I don't have to face
them. Your guy is good, too.

MONDESI
You should see his wife.

Mondesi holds out his hands - "big tits." Scott laughs.

CUT TO: A different BLUE JAY is on first chatting with Scott.

SCOTT
Look for it. M. Night Shyamalan
uses the color red in every movie.

CUT TO: A different BLUE JAY is on first.

SCOTT
After you add the garlic, let it
simmer until it reduces by half -

BLUE JAY PLAYER
Hey, Scott.

He nods. Scott looks over: A's Pitcher MULDER stares at him.

SCOTT
Oh, hey, sorry. Go ahead.

Scott hurries to his position. Mulder throws. The batter hits a hard one-hopper <u>right at first</u>. Scott easily, calmly even, snags it on a hard hop, tags, throws to second - DOUBLE PLAY!

EXT. GENERAL MANAGER'S BOX - NIGHT

The A's lead 6-1. Paul sees Scott at first: Scott is actually

enjoying himself, he even LAUGHS. Paul talks into his cell.

PAUL
(Into phone)
I swear, Scott is going to be serving drinks out there soon.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - MOVING

Billy laughs, on his cell phone. Taggert sits next to him.

BILLY
One win down. Ten to go. Let's work on Mr. Swing-At-Everything.

INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Billy joins the A's Players and Coaches visit to a Children's Ward of a local hospital. Players chat with patients, pass out A's souvenirs, sign autographs, and pose for photos. Tejada has great rapport with the kids. He makes them laugh.

There's a break as the NURSES cut and pass out slices of a huge cake decorated as a baseball. Billy goes up to Tejada.

BILLY
The kids love you, Miggy.

TEJADA
I got ten brothers and sisters, Billy Beane.

A Nurse hands them each a slice. <u>Tejada inhales his!</u> Wolfs it down in 3 seconds. Billy is grossed out, but then realizes -

BILLY
You're the youngest.

TEJADA
(Turns, icing on nose)
Yes. How you know that?

BILLY
Dirt poor, the Dominican Republic, ten older siblings - no wonder you can't wait. You'd starve!

Billy grabs four slices of cake. He hands one to Tejada.

BILLY
You made it, Miggy! You're in the bigs. There will <u>always</u> be more.
(Gives him another slice)
Same goes for good pitches.
(And another slice)
<u>Never</u> swing at the first pitch.

TEJADA
I swing when I want, Billy Beane.

BILLY
You hit .44 points lower when you swing at the first pitch. So stop.

Now that gets Tejada's attention. He starts to get it.

TEJADA
You say I hit more...if I no swing.

BILLY
Yes! You wait. No swing. And you'll-
(Gives him last slice
Get a good pitch. You hit that.

TEJADA
How I hit if I no swing?

BILLY
No, <u>those</u> you swing at!

EXT. FIELD, ON-DECK CIRCLE, A'S DUGOUT - NIGHT

Tejada is in the on-deck circle. His turn to hit. As Tejada heads for the plate, he talks to himself.

TEJADA
Ningún oscilación. Espera.

As Tejada reaches, the plate CUT TO:

INTERCUT - TELEVISION SCREEN - *BASEBALL TONIGHT*-TYPE PROGRAM

SPORTS SHOW HOST
We want to show you one at-bat from today's Oakland game. Miguel Tejada shows great control as he forces...

CUT TO: GAME FOOTAGE - FAST CUTS

Shot after shot of Tejada fouling off pitches.

SPORTS SHOW HOST (O.S.)
...the Tigers' pitcher to throw him 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - you get the idea - 14 pitches. FOURTEEN! He kept fouling off bad pitches until-

CUT TO: TEJADA'S P.O.V. - AT BAT - F/X

T*he ball slows down* until it stops in mid-air! It gets bigger and turns into a cake. The cake hovers, letter-high, *waiting*.

SPORTS SHOW HOST (O.S.)
He got the one he liked.

Tejada swings. He SMASHES it. It's out of here - a home run!

INT. BILLY'S CAR - CIRCLING STADIUM

Billy has NPR on. Hearing a ROAR from the stadium, Billy switches the radio to the game's play-by-play in time to hear-

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)
It's gone! A 3-run homer by Tejada.

Smiling, Billy turns to the radio to a different station. [**MUSIC** UP: *Let's Get This Party Started* by Pink.]

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUMS, BILLY'S OFFICE - MONTAGE - MUSIC OVER

- The A's celebrate a win over the Detroit Tigers.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And the A's win to complete a three game sweep of the Tigers.

- Billy changes his chart. A's: 22 wins, 28 losses.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE A'S CLUBHOUSE

Billy is headed for the weight room, but stops when he hears.

CHAD (O.S.)
Heads...Heads...Tails...Tails.

Billy peers around the corner.

ANGLE ON - HALLWAY - BILLY'S P.O.V.

Chad, Tejada, Chavez, Ramon, and Scott stand around watching Washington: he is flipping a coin. Chad writes down the

result of each flip. None of the ballplayers notice Billy.

CHAD
Heads...Tails...Stop. That's ten flips - six heads, four tails.

TEJADA
No, no, that's no right. Billy Beane, he say it always the same, heads and tails. Always the same.

The players look at each other, confused. Chad saves the day -

CHAD
Two more.

They all nod, now hopeful again. Washington resumes flipping.

CHAD
Tails...tails...Six and six!

The ballplayers let out a CHEER. Justice steps into the hall.

JUSTICE
What you all cheering about?

CHAD
Probability always wins!

ANGLE ON - BILLY

Shaking his head, he goes into the weight room, smiling.

EXT. DUGOUT, A'S COLISEUM - PRE GAME - DAY

Players stretch and warm up. Art sits on the bench, writing up his line up card. Billy appears in the dugout.

BILLY
Art, I can use your help.

ART HOWE
With what?

BILLY
A new strategy. We need to make any change we can, no matter how small, if it will help us win. I need you change how you manage the team.

ART HOWE
How? What do you want me to do?

BILLY
Stand.

ART HOWE
What?

BILLY
During the game - no more sitting. When you sit in the dugout you look like a P.O.W. Like the Viet Cong are about to make you and Wash play Russian Roulette. This is better.

He physically moves Art to the end of the dugout. Art resists ("What the...?") but Billy barely notices. He positions Art so he stands on the top dugout step, right leg on the field.

BILLY
Now, like this. Put your hand here - - raise your chin. Lean a little.
(Makes him lean forward)
Stand like that the players *have* to look up to you. You're George Washington crossing the Delaware to kick some Hessian ass. That's you from now on - Art Kick-Their-Ass Howe.
(Steps back, studies him)
You've got a great chin.

ART HOWE
What?

BILLY
Stick that baby out. Point it at those Hessians in the other dugout.

ART HOWE
I think better sitting down.

Art starts to leave. Billy blocks him.

BILLY
I don't need you to think, Art. I need you to stand.

ART HOWE
You got some stat that says we win 12.2 more games when I stand?

BILLY
No. I just like how it looks.

INT. ANGELS' STADIUM - DAY

Magnante gives up a hit. The Angels score a winning run.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
A's won the first three games of the series, but this one gets away when Magnante can't hold the lead.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Billy watches Magnante on his game tape. He turns to look at his chart: A's - 25 wins, 29 losses. He turns back to his TV.

ONSCREEN: Justice has a 3-0 count. Justice swings at the next pitch. A long fly. Going, going... Caught! Justice is out.

Game over. Billy glares at he screen, looking pissed off.

INT. AIRPLANE, A'S CHARTER - DAY

Players board the plane, find seats, and stow carry-on bags. Billy gets on and walks down the aisle.

BILLY
Good luck, guys. Just keep doing what you've been doing.

Reaching Justice's row, Billy plops down in the empty seat next to him. Leans in, quietly.

BILLY
From now on, when the count is 3-0, I want you to take the next pitch. You're passing up too many walks.

JUSTICE
You take the fucking walk! I'm a power hitter.

Players sitting nearby qo quiet, watching the confrontation.

BILLY
You *were*. But lots of balls that used to go out now are outs.

JUSTICE
I got 300 homers. How many you got? *Three*. 3 homers in 300 at-bats, Three more than a dead man.
(MORE)

JUSTICE (cont'd)
Your bullshit don't work on me. I was *there*.

EXT. MINNESOTA TWINS STADIUM - DAY

Billy, now a Twin, at. PAN TO: Justice, a 22-year-old rooke, watches Billy from the Visitor's dugout.

JUSTICE (V.O.)
I saw it. The great Billy Beane!

Billy strikes out. He stomps back to the Twins dugout.

JUSTICE (V.O.)
You couldn't hit.

Reaching the dugout Billy ERUPTS: he smashes a water cooler, attacks the dugout toilet, porcelain flying, and slams his bat against the wall until it breaks in two.

INT. AIRPLANE - RESUME

JUSTICE
I *can*. So leave me alone and let me hit. That's why you hired me.

BILLY
No, it's not. We don't win when one player gets a hit. We win when the team scores a run.
(Beat)
I hired you to get on base, Dave. Any way you can. If I didn't, you'd be warming the bench in the Bronx.

Billy stands and walks down the aisle of the plane.

BILLY
That goes for all of you.
(Points at Chad)
You'd be mowing lawns in Mississippi.
(Points at Scott)
You'd be selling cars for your father-in-law.
(Points at Velarde)
You'd be retired.
(Points at Tejada)
Your batting average would be less than your weight.
(To rest of the team)
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
None of you would be playing if it wasn't for me.

Players REACT: Chad is embarrassed, Justice is angry. The others glare at Billy, full of resentment. Billy smiles.

BILLY
That's *why* you're here! You each have a huge flaw, some glaring weakness, that every other team focused on so much it made them miss your strengths. I didn't. Your strengths make you worth more than your weaknesses.
(Beat)
I'm giving each of you a chance. Maybe your last. To show baseball judged you wrong. You do that by winning. Win and you prove I'm right and they're wrong about you.
(Beat)
Have a good trip. Remember, I'll still be here when you get back.

Billy walks off the plane. MOVE IN ON: Justice.

EXT. ARLINGTON STADIUM, CHICAGO - DAY

Justice up. Bases loaded. The count is 3-0. Justice steps out of the box. Looks at Washington, gets a sign. Justice looks at first where Scott is the base runner. They hold a look.

He gets back in the box. The pitcher throws. Justice doesn't swing. Ball FOUR! As Justice takes first, he yells to Scott.

JUSTICE
Maybe this shit works.

As Tejada, on 3rd, comes home a scoreboard in the b.g. shows: **Dave Justice - 1,000th career RBI.** Seeing it, Justice laughs.

EXT. FIRST BASE, FIELD, ARLINGTON STADIUM - DAY

Scott chats with a TEXAS RANGER base runner between pitches. On the next pitch, the ball is hit right at Scott. It takes a hard, tricky bounce, but he snags it for the out!

WASHINGTON (O.S.)
PICKIN' MACHINE!

Scott looks at Washington in the dugout. He nods thanks. In the dugout, Chad, seeing Scott relax, leaps up to yell-

CHAD
PICKIN' MACHINE!

Tejada and Ramon exchange a look. They stand, joining Chad.

CHAD
PICKIN' MACHINE!

TEJADA AND RAMON *
PICKIN' MACHINE!

Soon, the entire team is up, off the bench, shouting.

ENTIRE TEAM
PICKIN' MACHINE!

Chad turns: only Justice is on the bench. He waves "Come on". Beat. Finally, Justice stands and joins with his teammates.

All of the A's are standing and shouting together.

JUSTICE
PICKIN' MACHINE!

ENTIRE TEAM
PICKIN' MACHINE!

ANGLE ON - FIRST BASE

Hearing his whole team cheer him on, Scott beams. PAN OUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Billy watches this scene play out on his tape. Just then -

MAGNANTE (O.S.)
One more win. You're in good shape.

Billy looks up. Magnante stands in his doorway. He changes Billy's chart to add the last win: the A's are now 28-29.

MAGNANTE
Paul told me. He's smart, but can't keep a secret. He caves easy.

BILLY
I'm not safe. Cleveland decided now is a good time to start winning.

MAGNANTE
We'll take 'em, don't worry. I want you to stick around.

HOLD ON: Billy, looking at Magnante, genuinely touched.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And with that, the A's lead sails away over the left field wall..

EXT. A'S STADIUM, FIELD

Magnante watches a ball hit by a CLEVELAND INDIAN sail over the fence. A 3-run homer gives Cleveland a 1-run lead.

BILLY (O.S.)
Shit! This is a nightmare.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy and Paul watch the game tape on his TV. The broadcast cuts to a close-up of Magnante, head down.

PAUL
29 losses. In 17 of them, the winning run came off a left handed reliever. That's 59%.
(Beat)
We need to win the next two. You can't afford another loss or -

He doesn't finish. Long beat. Suddenly, Billy perks up.

BILLY
Did you see that?

ANGLE ON - TELEVISION - BILLY AND PAUL'S P.O.V.

The tape kept playing: Indians left-handed relief pitcher RICARDO RINCON, 26, gets Chavez to pop-up to end the game.

BILLY (O.S.)
Rincon came in, struck out Justice, got Tejada to ground out and Chavez to pop-up. He retired the side with just six pitches.

RESUME - OFFICE

Billy stares at Rincon on the screen. Grabs his phone, dials.

BILLY
I'll get him. Rincon.

PAUL
Rincon's stats are as good as Chad's. How can we ever afford him?

BILLY
That's why God made teams with lots of money. For me to exploit.

PAUL
Even if you can get him, we have no slot open. Unless you cut someone.
(Beat)
It'd have to be Mags, he's a lefty.

BILLY
I can't cut Mags.

PAUL
He's the only logical choice.

They hold a look. Billy knows he's right, but resists.

BILLY
Let me get Rincon first.

MARK SHAPIRO (O.S. - ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Mark Shapiro.

BILLY
Mark, it's Billy. Paul is with me.

MARK SHAPIRO (O.S. - ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Hey, how's working for Billy, Paul?

PAUL
It's been a real education.

BILLY
You still need a 3rd baseman, Mark?

INT. G.M.'S OFFICE, JACOBS FIELD -

Mark, on the phone, is looking at his board.

MARK SHAPIRO
Thanks, but I'm good right now.

BILLY (ON PHONE)
Mark, it's me, Billy! Cox is hitting .201. You Lopez on the D.L.

Mark sits up. It's like Billy could see his board.

MARK SHAPIRO
I'm open to any offer, Billy.

BILLY (ON PHONE)
I'll get you one. I'd want Rincon.

MARK SHAPIRO
Mets and Giants asked about him.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Billy is already dialing another line while talking to Mark.

BILLY
I hear their interest is soft. I'd jump on my offer if I was you.
(Switches line, new call)
Denise, Billy Beane, General Manager of the Oakland Athletics. Denise, who is the best looking GM in the game today?...Exactly right, Denise. He in?...I'll hold.

PAUL
What's your plan?

BILLY
Offer Venafro, our lefty in AAA, to the Mets and Giants. Eliminates my competition and, at best, I start a bidding war and get the cash for Rincon; at worse, I'll pick up the 3rd baseman Mark needs so I don't have to give up one of my own. This could be a "Fucking A" trade.
(Into phone)
Omar, Billy. Do the Mets need a young, talented left-hand reliever? ...You should see our guy Venafro pitch. Looks better than his stats.

Gives Paul a "We don't buy this, but you do" look.

BILLY
Can you hold a sec, Omar?
(Picks up another line)
Sabes, it's Billy. I got an offer from the Mets on Venafro, but want to give you a chance. Let me know if the Giants are in or out ASAP.
(Returns to first call)
How about it, Omar? In or out.
(Covers phone, to Paul)
He wants to know who we want.
(Paul runs out)
I'll call you back in five minutes with a name, Omar.
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
(Picks up other line.)
Hello...Hey, Mark...Okay, thanks.

Billy hangs up. Paul runs back in with two huge notebooks.

BILLY
Mark gave me a two-hour exclusive on Rincon. Apparently, the Mets and Giants both had second thoughts.

PAUL
(Sarcastic)
Gee, I wonder how that happened.

Each takes a notebook and starts flipping through: it's all the Mets minor league players. Billy stops when notices The History Channel, playing on his TV, is showing a documentary on The Bastille.

BILLY
Ever been to Paris?

PAUL
Yeah, two summers ago.

BILLY
Is the Bastille still there, or was it torn down after the Revolution?

PAUL
I think it's just a bunch of rocks.

BILLY
You mean you never went!?!

PAUL
No! Billy, please - we've got about a minute to find the best 3rd baseman in the Mets system.

BILLY
No rush. We won't need Rincon until the 6th or 7th inning.

Paul stops to look at Billy like he's truly nuts. He holds up his notebook, showing Billy a Mets minor league player.

PAUL
What about Bennett?

BILLY
He's 26 and in Double-A. Forget it. How about this guy? Just for his name - Furbush!

PAUL
Look - Garcia? He's twenty-two.

BILLY
(Picks up phone, dials)
How could you go to Paris and not see the Bastille?!
(Into phone)
Denise, Billy Beane. Okay, who's the coolest G.M. in baseball?... Right again, Denise...Omar I won't ask for anyone good. Just Garcia. And $250,000...Venafro's that good.
(Covers phone. To Paul.)
He's all,"Uh, Gee, I don't know!" He thinks he can still get Rincon.
(Into phone, determined)
Omar, look, I've got Rincon. It's a done deal*!* Your only concern now is that the Giants want Venafro. You sure you want that to happen, Omar? You can win this, Omar. You can win this because I need money and you can give it to me. You can get Venafro, or face him when you play San Francisco. Do we have a deal, Omar?...Okay, good. I'll call you.

Billy hangs up. Beat. He sits, staring at the phone.

PAUL
Call Mark. Close on Rincon. Before anyone can change their mind.

Still nothing. Billy turns, studies the board of A's players.

PAUL
You have no choice. We need Rincon to win. Cutting Mags is the only way to make room on the roster.

BILLY
(Points to board)
It's not. Velarde can play third! I'll kill the deal, do a straight-up trade - Velarde for Rincon.

PAUL
You yourself said we need the Mets' money to pay for Rincon. Besides, Velarde delivers - Mags hasn't. He must know you've been carrying him for two years. You can't afford to
(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)
any more. Mags will understand.
(Beat)
Like you told the team - you have to be totally committed to this.

BILLY
I know. I know it's the right *baseball* move. But it's the *wrong* thing to do to a friend.
(Turns to Paul, hopeful)
I'll give Mags a few days' rest!

PAUL
We'll lose Rincon.

BILLY
I won't need him if Mags can bounce back. He lost last night because he's tired.

PAUL
He lost because he can't pitch. All his numbers are down this year.

BILLY
He is a second-half pitcher, always has been. Check his stats - Mags improves after the All-Star break.

PAUL
Rincon has good numbers right now.

BILLY
I CAN WAIT FOUR DAYS. <u>Four</u> <u>days</u>.

Beat. Paul, tentative, cautious, like approaching a lion -

PAUL
Billy, if we lose one more game, <u>*you*</u> won't be here in four days. Then what happens to the team?

HOLD ON: Billy. Torn. Finally, he picks up the phone, dials.

BILLY
(Into phone)
Hey, Mark, it's Billy. Let's do it.

INT. HALLWAY, UNDER STADIUM

Rincon, arriving for today's game, heads toward a door - "VISITORS CLUBHOUSE." As he approaches, his cell rings.

RINCON
Hola...Si...Que????

Confused, Rincon stops. He turns to look down the hall. At the far end is another door: “OAKLAND A’S CLUBHOUSE”.

INT. MAJOR LEAGUE CLUB OFFICES, VARIOUS - DAY

Even with e-mail and fax, there’s still a teletype machine in every MLB club front office that prints out injury reports, transactions, and trades on a paper roll.

In four different offices, the machine types: “**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - OAKLAND ACQUIRES RINCON FROM CLEVELAND**” A hand tears it off in each. Same reaction, four pronunciations:

L.A. DODGERS
FUCKing A.

BOSTON RED SOX
Fucking *Ayyyy*.

TAMPA DEVIL RAYS
FuckING A.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX
Fuuuuccking A.

INT. HALLWAY, UNDER STADIUM - OUTSIDE A’S CLUBHOUSE

Billy and Paul walk down the hall fast.

BILLY
You take Spanish at Harvard?

PAUL
Latin. It might help. Spanish *is* a Romance language.

BILLY
Great, we can seduce him.

They turn the corner: Rincon is still wandering between the clubhouses, lost. Billy goes up to him, arms open, warmly.

BILLY
Ricardo! *Bienvenido*. Aloha.

RINCON
No entiendo. ¿Quiénes son yo a echar para esta noche?

BILLY
(Points to A’s clubhouse)
I got you. You are on my team now.

RINCON
Lanzo para usted. No Cleveland?

BILLY
Yes! *No mas* Cleveland, *no mas*. You are on my team now. We have uniform for you and everything.
(Ushering him inside)
You'll love the guys on our team. Mucho bueno, mucho fun. Good guys!

Billy literally shoves Rincon into the locker room, then whips out his cellphone and dials. Billy talks on his cell.

BILLY
Mags, it's Billy. I need to talk to you...No, in person. Where are you? ...Shit! Is that today?
(Beat)
Wait there. I'm coming over.

INT. HAAS ATRIUM, SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART - DAY

The grand opening of the Magritte exhibit. A large well-dressed CROWD takes in his famous surreal paintings on the walls as WAITERS circulate with trays of drinks.

FIND in the middle of it: Billy. He sticks out in this crowd. Suddenly, before he knows it, Lauren is next to him, beaming.

LAUREN
I never thought you'd come!

She hugs him, warmly and long. Putting Billy in a tight spot.

BILLY
I knew how hard you've worked on this. I wanted to support you.

LAUREN
It means a lot to me. Really.

A moment between them. Billy is reluctant break it, but must.

BILLY
Is Mags here?

LAUREN
I just saw him.

BILLY
Where? I need to talk to him.

LAUREN
What's the rush?

Billy looks at her. She knows something's up, but just then - Magnante and Jill join them. Magnante is wary of Billy.

MAGNANTE
Hey, what's up?

BILLY
Not here.

That's all the confirmation he needs. Mags turns grim.

MAGNANTE
Shit! Just say it, Billy.

Beat. Lauren and Jill aren't sure what's going on. Finally-

BILLY
I traded for Rincon.

Jill lets out a CRY. Lauren instinctively puts an arm around her. Even knowing it was coming, Magnante still flips out.

MAGS
You could've waited! Four days.

BILLY
I couldn't. I needed Rincon. Today.

MAGNANTE
I NEED TO FEED MY KIDS, GODDAMNIT!
You didn't think about them. No!
All you care about is squeezing out
another run, winning one more game.

BILLY
The team needs wins to survive.
That keeps hundreds employed.

MAGNANTE
That's how you do it. Reduce us all
to a number. Here's a number. Four!

BILLY
Mags, I know. Believe me, I'm sorry-

MAGNANTE
I'm four days away from my full
pension. FOUR GODDAMN DAYS!

Anger and despair makes Magnante do something he shouldn't:

he lifts his arm to hit Billy. Lightning fast, Billy grabs it by the wrist, in mid-air. He grips it tight. Magnante winces.

MAGNANTE
That's my pitching arm.

BILLY
Then you should take care of it.

Billy releases his arm. Magnante stands there, quiet now.

MAGNANTE
You're Them now.

BILLY
I'm not.

MAGNANTE
No, you're worse. They at least felt bad when they cut you.
(Turns and walks off)
Come on, Jill. Let's go home.

Jill hesitates before she follows him. Right at Billy.

JILL
You've been in my home. I fed you. You played with my kids.
(A final blow-)
Mags and I were going out after the game. We hired a sitter, for god's sake.

She hurries to join Magnante. They exit. Lauren turns and looks at Billy. He sees the disbelief horror in her face.

BILLY
I had to.

LAUREN
Because winning is so important. And the only way was to fire your best friend.

BILLY
A team is a complicated puzzle. Mags didn't fit anymore.

LAUREN
So, if I'm lucky, you'll find a place to put me in. No thanks.
(Beat)
I hope you enjoy your winning team.

Just then Tom (the hedge fund manager) and a BOARD MEMBER walk up. Lauren is back on duty. Billy watches, then exits.

EXT. A'S STADIUM, FIELD - [ON TELEVISION SCREEN]

Rincon, in an A's uniform, strikes out a Cleveland Indian.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The newest A, Rincon, gets the win!

PAN OUT TO SHOW: INT. BILLY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

Billy watches his game tape, feeling slightly vindicated.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The A's have won 11 of their last 14 and are at .500 for the first time all year.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

The A's players, in golf clothes and holding clubs, wait to tee off. Lots of LAUGHING and joking. Justice, in plus-fours and a plaid tam o'shanter does play-by-play as Zito tees up.

JUSTICE
Teeing off next, from the planet Zircon ...Bar-ree Ziiito.

Zito drives the ball. He turns back to the players. Surprised-

ZITO
Dude!

They all look: Billy is there, leaning on a cart.

JUSTICE
This tournament is for players only.

BILLY
I *was* a player.
(Walks to back of cart)
It's best I don't play - I'd hate to make you all look bad.
(The players ROAR)
I wanted you to bring you this -

Billy opens a large chest on the back of the cart: it's full of ice-cold beer. The players all CHEER! Justice grins slyly.

JUSTICE
You gonna charge us?

BILLY
No, it's on me. Well, on Rorich.
(Beat)
You guys did good. Keep it up.

Billy starts to walk away. Before he gets far -

JUSTICE
Hey, Billy.
(Billy turns back)
You, too.

EXT. FIELD, SAFECO PARK - SEATTLE - NIGHT

Chad pitches. A Mariners BATTER swings. CRACK! A line drive-

The ball hits the back of Chad's pitching hand. A freak accident. Chad has the presence of mind to pick up the ball and throw it to Scott at first to get the Mariner Batter out.

Time! Scott, Tejada and Ramon gather around Chad, who flexes his hand, grimacing. The A's TRAINER runs to the mound.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy sits a lift bench, soaked in sweat, on his cell phone.

BILLY
Shit...Okay.

He hangs up. Turns on the weight room TV. ONSCREEN: Art and the Trainer escort a tight-lipped Chad off the field.

He turns off the TV. Billy sees his reflection in the screen.

RORICH (O.S.)
FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS!?!

INT. RORICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Rorich's office has an incredible view of San Francisco and the Bay. Billy stands by his desk, waiting.

RORICH
For a relief pitcher?! How many of those do you need?

BILLY
Chad went on the D.L. Jeff Tam is a steal at 400K.

RORICH
I gave you all I'm willing to spend - bring someone up from the minors.

BILLY
If I had anyone good, I would.

RORICH
Find a cheaper pitcher than Tam.

BILLY
I did that for you in April, Roy. It's July. We've got a shot at first. If there was ever a time to spend money, this is it.

RORICH
It's *always* time to spend someone else's money.

Beat.

BILLY
Then I'll use *my* salary to buy Tam.

RORICH
What?! How will you pay your bills?

BILLY
I'll survive. Because at the end of the season, I'll sell Tam to a team for twice what I paid. But -
(Beat)
I get to pocket the difference.

RORICH
You can't do that.

BILLY
I can if it's my money. This could be a whole new cottage industry for me. I'll get rich just off trades.

Rorich isn't sure Billy is serious. But knows for sure he wants to be the one who makes money.

RORICH
You can have the money for Tam. But that's it!

SMASH CUT TO: INT./EXT. - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

- JEFF TAM, the A's new relief pitcher, gets a WHITE SOX out.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER
The A's have been two completely different teams this year.

- A's vs. Mariners: Scott draws a walk with bases loaded, forcing in a run.

- The chart: A's at 43-31, in 3rd place, 3 games out of 1st.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
They were so far behind early on most people had written them off.

- A's vs. Boston: A's exchange post-victory high-fives.

- Billy listens to NPR in his car as he circles the stadium.

- Zito and Tejada are introduced at the 2002 All-Star game. They watch the starters get introduced: Johnny Damon in left and Jason Giambi at first.

- Billy walks jauntily into his office. Stops to look at the chart: A's are 73 and 51, tied for 2nd, 2 games out of first.

- An offense explosion: Scott walks...Chavez hits a double... Tejada hits a single...Justice hits a double...Ramon singles.

- A's EMPLOYEES cram the hall outside Billy's closed door. Scott, Tejada, Zito, and Ramon, showered and changed after the game, arrive just as Billy opens his door.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The last two months they've turned the baseball world upside down.

Billy changes the chart: the A's are now 76 wins, 54 losses. <u>And finally in first place</u>! Betty passes out plastic cups as champagne POPS. People talk in groups, LAUGH. It's a party!

Billy talks with Scott and Zito. Paul hurries up to Billy, holding a sheet of paper torn off the MLB teleype machine.

PAUL
This just came in.

He hands Billy the sheet: "**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - NEW YORK YANKEES ACQUIRE RELIEF PITCHER MIKE MAGNANTE OFF WAIVERS....**"

BILLY
Good for Mags. He gets his full pension.
(To Paul, nods at chart)
32 games left. What do we need to do to end up with the most wins?

PAUL
The Yankees are playing .640 ball. Assuming they keep that pace, they should finish with just over 100 wins, maybe 102 or 103.
(Nods at chart)
We'd have to go 27 and 5 - an .843 winning percentage. *Two hundred* points higher than our average.

Billy takes that in, begrudgingly nods acceptance.

BILLY
Okay. Let's focus on winning our division, making the playoffs.

Scott and Zito see Billy's disappointment. They share a look.

EXT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE A'S CLUBHOUSE

Billy heads to the weight room. He stops: a "DO NOT ENTER - PLAYERS MEETING - PLAYERS ONLY" sign is on the clubhouse door. Billy eyes it, curious, then goes in the weight room.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE

Scott and Zito stand in front of the team.

SCOTT
32 and 5. Let's try. For Billy.

The Players CHEER. Excited and inspired, the team runs out...

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE - TIME LAPSE

...they trudge back in, gloomy. They toss equipment or sit.

JUSTICE
SHIT!

Suddenly, they all hear -

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
With today's loss, the A's have 7 wins and 5 losses since taking over first place in the AL West.

The players look up. The Clubhouse TV plays a post-game show. ONSCREEN: The PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER and COLOR COMMENTATOR

COLOR COMMENTATOR
You have to ask if the they can handle the pressure-

The screen suddenly goes BLACK. A hand has reached up to turn it off. The hand belongs to Scott who turns to his teammates.

SCOTT
We know what we have to do.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

Billy glumly looking at his chart. A's are 83-79.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Win the next twenty.

EXT. CAMDEN YARDS, CLEVELAND - DAY

- Tejada slashes a double to score two runs. A's win.

- A's high-five at the end of a game. They win again.

- Oriole fans leave in droves in the 7th inning. The scoreboard shows: A's - 15, Orioles - 1.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, SHOWERS -

Scott exits the shower as Tejada goes in. They high-five.

SCOTT
Three down.

TEJADA
Seventeen to go.

EXT. TROPICANA FIELD, TAMPA BAY - NIGHT

Zito is interviewed by a FEMALE REPORTER on the field after winning a game. During the interview, Tejada and Chavez sneak up behind Zito, commando-style, and <u>pull down his pants</u>.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul watches Billy tape a card over the "Games Behind" column that says: "WIN STREAK!" Billy puts a card under it: "9."

BILLY
What are the odds of winning 20 games in a row?

PAUL
Fourteen in a million.

BILLY
Do me a favor, don't tell the team.

EXT. VISITOR'S DUGOUT, ROYALS STADIUM - KANSAS CITY - DAY

Chad pitches. The batter grounds out to end the inning. Chad walks off the mound toward the dugout, head down.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
In his first game since coming off the DL, Bradford retires the side on three ground outs.

Reaching the dugout, the players, including Justice, Scott, Tejada, and Chad, all find places on the bench. No one talks.

Suddenly, Chad drops to one knee and prays. Fervently. The players all eye Chad warily. After a moment, he sits back up.

CHAD
He says we might have a shot.

The damn bursts: <u>ALL THE PLAYERS talk</u> - "Yeah!...Just six more wins!...We can do that...Hell, yes!"

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Billy changes "WIN STREAK!" column to "14." Turns to Paul.

BILLY
For a team built on probabilities, they're damn good at defying them.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM

Scoreboard: Bottom of the 9th, 2 outs, Royals ahead, 5-4. Scott is on at first and Chavez on 2nd, Tejada is at bat.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The A's have won 18 in a row, two shy of setting the record, but are now down to their last out here.

EXT. CONCOURSE, A'S COLISEUM

Billy stands at an entrance to the seats. He can see the scoreboard from here, but not the field.

Billy starts to walk forward, toward the seats. To watch.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM

The pitcher throws. Tejada holds up. It's a strike.

EXT. CONCOURSE, A'S COLISEUM

Billy sees the outfield now. More diamond comes into view. He can almost see the A's base runners and Tejada at bat....

Billy stops. He can't do it. Billy turns and walks away.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM

The Pitch. Tejada swings. A 3-RUN HOMER! The A's mob Tejada.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Oh, my! The A's come-from-behind to keep the 19-game win streak alive.

EXT. CONCOURSE, A'S COLISEUM

Walking away, Billy hears the ROAR. He cracks a small smile

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
If they win tomorrow, the last day of the regular season, the A's make history by becoming the first team to win 20 games in a row. And it would give them...

EXT. HALLWAY, A'S EXECUTIVE OFFICES

A BUZZ of activity, and excitement: phones RING, people dash.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...the best record in baseball.

Billy walks through the chaos, calm. Passing Sales, he hears only, "Sold out" "No tickets." Billy passes the office of JIM YOUNG, head of A's Publicity, who is on the phone.

JIM YOUNG
(Into phone)
There is no room in the press box!
I got 36 reporters and 4 TV crews.

As Billy reaches his office, Betty comes out of hers.

BETTY
Someone's here to see you.

EXT. A'S STADIUM, FIELD - PRE-GAME BATTING PRACTICE - DAY

OPEN ON: Wolf. Billy walks over, sits down next to him, happy to see him back. They watch A's batting practice for a beat.

WOLF
The Mrs. suggested I come. More like an order. She isn't used to having me around all the time.

BILLY
I'm really glad she did.

WOLF
It's not the only reason. Something I wanted to tell you, had to tell you.
(Points at A's on field)
You were right. It's a good team.

Both know that was hard to admit. It means a lot to Billy.

BILLY
I never wanted things to end how they did. I look up to you, Wolf. I always have. I never told you this - I don't know what would've happened to me. If you hadn't been there -

Wolf puts his hand gently on Billy's to cut him off.

WOLF
You don't need to say it. I know.

Wolf leaves his hand on Billy's. They sit, watching grown men play baseball on a warm, sunny day in September. Finally-

WOLF
I've spent 57 years on a baseball field. Not many men are that lucky. The trick to life is to figure out what makes you happy, then find a way to make a living at it.
(To Billy, sincere)
It's the first part that's hard.

Billy nods he understands. He stands to go. Then leans down and kisses Wolf's cheek, an oddly gentle gesture for a big man. With one more pat on Wolf's hand, Billy turns and goes.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE

You can't tell the A's are about to play a huge game: they eat, dress just the same. Billy walks among them, talking to a few, LAUGHING with others. As Billy passes Art's office on his way out, Art comes out and stops him.

ART HOWE
I'm thinking of starting Mabry at first.

BILLY
Hatty delivers all year and tonight - the one game everyone in the world will watch - he's sitting on the bench. Doesn't seem fair.

ART HOWE
Torre has Byrd pitching. Mabry always hits Byrd hard.
(Beat)
I'm trying to be objective.

Gotcha.

BILLY
You're getting the hang of this.

ART HOWE
Must be all that standing. Drains all the blood from my brain.

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM - DAY

43,662 **SCREAMING** A's fans here to see history. They wave

orange “STREAK” signs and home-made signs for individual players. <u>It’s packed!</u> But Fans continue to stream in.

- The parking lot is full, people fight for spaces.

- Six huge TV control booth trucks broadcast it nationally.

- The Press box overflows with reporters, everyone packed in.

- Rorich schmoozes corporate bigwigs in the stadium’s boxes.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE A’S CLUBHOUSE

Billy is headed to the weight room when -

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Yo, Billy! Play much golf lately?

Billy turns: it’s Joe Torre, his first manager, back with the Mets. Torre stands in the doorway to the Visitor’s Clubhouse.

BILLY
Hey, Joe. No, hard to find the time during the season.
(Beat)
You know we have to kick your ass.

JOE TORRE
No way. If you win, you tie us for most wins. We win, we have it all to ourselves. You don’t stand a chance. We’re the Yankees.

BILLY
That’s why we play all 162.

INT. A’S STADIUM

A **CRESCENDO OF NOISE,** growing louder, building up to -

PUBLIC ADDRESS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Fans, here’s *your* Oakland AAAAAA’S!

As **LOUD** as it was, when the A’s take the field, it ***DOUBLES***!

A’s pitcher Zito throws his first pitch. The Yankee Batter pops-up. 1 out! The hometown A’s fans **ROAR** their approval!

INT. WEIGHT ROOM

In contrast to the stadium, dead quiet. The only sound: The **CLANK** of weights and Billy's breathing as he works out alone.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM - LATER - BOTTOM OF THE FIRST INNING

- JOHN MABRY singles. Durham scores from 3rd. A's lead 1-0.

- Tejada is hit by a pitch. He takes first, Mabry to second.

- With Tejada and Mabry on, Velarde walks. Bases now loaded.

- Chavez, the next batter, hits a triple. Three runs score.

The crowd, growing LOUDER with each run, is now **DEAFENING!**

INT. WEIGHT ROOM

Billy stops, cocks an ear: he hears thunder. Then realizes: it's the fans! Billy grins - to hear it down here, whatever is happening on the field must be *great*! Paul enters.

PAUL
11 to nothing, fifth inning. We're making history. Come watch.

BILLY
I'd ruin it for you.

PAUL
<u>It's a *game*</u>. A game is supposed to be fun. That's why people watch.

BILLY
I'd watch if I could. You can. You don't know how lucky you are.

PAUL
Neither do you. Don't you realize? Billy, the win streak, the best record - they did it <u>for</u> <u>you</u>.

They hold a look. Finally, Billy yields.

BILLY
I guess I could watch this one game. I mean, what are the chances of us losing an 11-run lead?

PAUL
23 in a million.

Oops! Anyone else would take those odds. Not Billy.

BILLY
I'll watch, but only on TV.

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Billy and Paul enter. Billy opens a mini-fridge Art has in the corner and takes out two beers. He hands one to Paul.

BILLY
A night of firsts. If I'm going to watch, you're going to drink.

Billy waits. Paul opens his beer. Takes a sip - YUCK!

PAUL
I still don't see the appeal.

BILLY
You will once the brain cells die.

They sit and watch a TV mounted up in a corner. ONSCREEN: Yankees have a RUNNER on second. Their next BATTER hits a fly ball to left. An easy out for a young fielder but Justice is *too slow*: the ball bounces in front of him.

Batter is safe. The Runner scores. As they watch Torre greet the runner at the dugout step, Paul turns to Billy, engaged.

Art heads to the mound. He taps his right arm. A bullpen gate opens: Chad runs out to the mound, head down the whole way.

PAUL
I read a paper on the Law of Competitive Balance. It argued that "momentum" really exists and that it always favors the team that's behind. It pulls winners *down* and pushing losers up. This game is a perfect example! If we go into the 9th tied, the Yankees *should* win.

BILLY
You're...*NOT*...helping!

PAUL
Oh. Right.

Billy glowers at the TV: Tejada and Chavez are shown talking.

BILLY
Look at Miggy's face. He's our only guy without a hit. Watch - he'll try and do more than he should.

EXT. PITCHER'S MOUND - FIELD - OAKLAND COLISEUM

Chad walks his first batter, Yankees catcher JORGE POSADA.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Bradford, maybe still a bit rusty from the DL, walks Posada. The A's starting to worry now, seeing their lead cut from 11 runs down to 6.

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE

Billy paces, barely glancing at the TV. He stops pacing: Chad walks the next Yankee batter, RONDELL WHITE.

BILLY
Chad ever walk two guys in a row?

PAUL
Not once all year.

ONSCREEN: Two on, no outs. Chad looks up to the heavens.

BILLY
Wolf says errors can get a player stuck in his head. Makes it so he can't do what you hired him for.

EXT. FIELD - MOUND

Chad throws his first pitch to batter DEREK JETER.

Jeter hits a slow grounder to the right side. Mabry races to get it. *LEAVING FIRST BASE UNCOVERED*. But Chad does not move.

BILLY (O.S.)
MOVE, CHAD! COVER FIRST! FIRST!

Realizing his mental error, Chad bolts. Mabry flips the ball to Chad who reaches first a *millisecond* after Jeter - "SAFE!"

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE

ONSCREEN: Torre flashes signs to his runners on 1st and 2nd and ROBIN VENTURA at-bat, who nods and steps into the box.

Paul sneaks a worried glance at Billy. Paul can see Billy's anger and frustration mounting as he watches the game.

ONSCREEN: Ventura hits Chad's next pitch. An easy one-hopper to Tejada. What Tejada does next drives Billy nuts!

BILLY
NO! Third! I told you he'd do this!
THIRD!

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM

Instead of an easy out at third, Tejada tries the "BIG" play: a force at home. His throw bounces in front of the plate. A run scores: 11-6, bases loaded, no outs.

Art explodes from the dugout. When he reaches the mound, Chad walks off, head down, passing Rincon coming in from the pen.

BILLY (V.O.)
SHIT! Chad comes in with a 6-run lead and leaves with the tying run on deck!

In the dugout, Chad puts his head in his hands, despondent. Justice comes over to sit next to Chad. Justice puts a comforting arm around his shoulders as he talks to him.

INT. HOWE'S OFFICE -

Billy and Paul watch Rincon get a Yankee batter to pop up.

The next batter hits a sacrifice fly. A run scores. Runners on 1st and 3rd, but the Yankees now have two outs.

PAUL
One more out - the inning is over.

That's when - who else? - Jason Giambi steps in to hit. Art exits the dugout to the mound. He taps his right arm.

BILLY (V.O.)
NO! WHAT IS ART DOING?!? Leave Rincon in!

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE

Billy stares at the TV in disbelief: JEFF TAM runs in from the A's bullpen as Rincon walks off, heading for the dugout.

BILLY
This is why I got Rincon!

PAUL
Jason's 5-for-8 against Rincon lifetime, only 1-for-5 against Tam. Art is going with the numbers.

BILLY
Tam - against Giambi? The league's hottest hitter right now! No.
(Turns to Paul)
There's someone else. We have a pitcher who *owns* *Giambi*. Who?

PAUL
Not really...

BILLY
We *do*. Got him out every time. You showed me the numbers. Who is it?

PAUL
It was Mags.

Beat. Billy gloomily watches Tam's first pitch: Ball one.

BILLY
Tell Scott to warm up. We go into the ninth tied, he may need to hit.

INT. INDOOR BATTING CAGE

Scott hits against a ball machine, warming up. Paul watches.

SCOTT
If I'm patient, lay off the first pitch, I might get something up.

PAUL
So be patient.

SCOTT
Long game. I didn't think I'd play.
(A confession)
I've had six cups of coffee.

He exits, heading to the field. Paul calls after him.

PAUL
The last time the A's lost an 11 run lead was 1936.

SCOTT
Great. Good to know.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

The count is 3-2. 1 pitch. Tam needs a strike, Giambi a hit. Tam throws his 10th pitch. Giambi swings. The ball rockets to left, sails over the wall for a 3-run homer!

INT. ART HOWE'S OFFICE

Billy, seeing Giambi's homer, finally erupts. Grabbing a bat from the corner, Billy TRASHES ART'S OFFICE - he hits filing cabinets, slams chairs, takes out a coffee maker. *It's the ugliest, most violent display we've seen yet.*

BILLY
GOD DAMN BASEBALL! I SHOULDN'T BE HERE!

Once the office is totally wrecked, Billy stops. Looks at the destruction around him. Spent, he sinks into a chair. Beat.

BILLY
It's okay. It's safe now.

Paul pokes his head in the doorway, looking terrified.

BILLY
Sorry.

PAUL
I've kind of been expecting it.

BILLY
Well, you caught a good one.

EXT. DUGOUT, HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Billy, age 17, SLAMS an aluminum bat against a dugout wall.

BILLY (V.O.)
Last one like that was a game in my senior year.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

CLOSE ON: An open car trunk. A bent bat is tossed in. SLAM!

BILLY (O.S.)
I went 0-for-5.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - BEACH - SUNSET - REPEAT SHOT

Billy, still in uniform, parked at the ocean, writes in his notebook. He opens the cover where he charts his hitting stats. *We finally see the graph*: the line is going *down*.

BILLY (V.O.)
That's when I first realized -

As before, he **SLAPS** the book closed and throws it in back.

RESUME - ART'S OFFICE -

BILLY
I might not make it as a pro.

Billy stops, staring at the TV. Paul turns to see why.

ONSCREEN: The visitor's bullpen opens. A pitcher emerges.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Here in Oakland, coming in to try and deny the A's their 20th win in a row and 103rd for the season is -

Jogging to the mound, they pitcher looks up: it's Mags.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Veteran reliever Mike Magnante.

Mags reaches the mound. Torre hands him the ball.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Ironically, Torre picked him up from the A's off waivers. Since joining the Yankees, Magnante has given up only 4 hits in 12 innings.

Billy stares at Mags, taking his warm-up pitches. Then Torre appears on-screen, returning to his seat in the dugout, calm.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Sometimes changing teams is all a pitcher needs to improve. Baseball is all about good team chemistry.

Billy can't take it. He turns away in disgust and anger. Only then does he see: Chad. Sits on a clubhouse bench, head down.

EXT. CLUBHOUSE, BENCH - IN FRONT OF CHAD'S LOCKER -

Billy quietly sits next to Chad, who can't look at him.

CHAD
I'm sorry, Billy. I hit my spot.

BILLY
Game's not over yet.

Just then -

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Dye flies out to right. The A's down to their last out in the 9th.

They look at the clubhouse TV. ONSCREEN: Dye jogs back to the dugout. Billy turns to Chad.

BILLY
You won't get every guy out, or make every single play right. It's a game where *failing* two-thirds of the time is greatness.
(Beat)
As bad as you feel right now, think - is there any job you'd rather have? Anyplace else you'd rather be? Something else you want to do?

CHAD
No.

Long beat. Billy puts his hand on Chad's shoulder.

BILLY
Then you're where you're supposed to be.

Billy looks up at the TV. ONSCREEN: Scott Hatteberg steps into the on deck circle.

Billy, eyes locked on Scott, stands. Turns to Chad and Paul.

BILLY
Come on. Both of you. Come with me.

He hurries toward the tunnel up to the field.

PAUL
Where are you going?

Billy looks back at him like “What a stupid question?”

BILLY
To watch a ball game.

He disappears up the tunnel. Chad turns to Paul, both amazed.

CHAD
What are the odds on that?

PAUL
Immeasurable.

INT. TUNNEL

Paul catches up to Billy as he opens the tunnel doors to -

EXT. OAKLAND COLISEUM, EXIT FROM TUNNEL - BILLY’S P.O.V.

The packed stadium. The green field. The players in the dugout next to them. It’s a real live baseball game.

And Billy Beane is going to watch it. Live.

Paul stands next to him. Behind them, Chad rejoins his teammates in the dugout.

EXT. FIELD, A’S COLISEUM

Scott takes his stance in the box. Looks out. Mags glares back. Mags rears back and throws - a low fastball. Just as Scott predicted. Scott deliberately does not swing at it.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
First pitch. A low fastball.
Hatteberg doesn’t go for it.

EXT. NEXT TO A’S DUG OUT

Billy watches Mags throw his second pitch. A strike, 0-2. Scott is down to his last swing.

Paul looks at Billy, afraid what this will do. To Paul's never-ending surprise, Billy grins.

EXT. A'S DUGOUT

The entire team is on its feet, watching intently.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM

Mags takes a sign. Throws. Scott fouls it off. Still 0-2.

EXT. STANDS, A'S COLISEUM

Everyone watches. No one waves a sign. A dull roar.

EXT. FIELD - NEXT TO A'S DUGOUT

Billy and Paul stand, watching. Paul holds his breath.

To put pressure on Scott, Torre calls "Time." He goes to the mound and briefly talks to Mags. With a slap on the butt, Torre returns to the dugout. He looks at Billy as he goes.

Scott follows Torre's gaze. He sees Billy. Scott can't believe Billy is really there, watching. Billy YELLS to him.

BILLY
Pretty exciting game, huh?

Hatty gets back in the box. Mags takes the sign, sets. The tension is incredible. The fans are going berserk.

Finally, Mags rears back, and throws - LETTER-HIGH FASTBALL!

Scott takes his short swing. His barrel finds the bat.

The ball takes off toward right. Scott leaves the box in his crouching run. Head down, he can't see anything.

EXT. NEXT TO A'S DUG OUT

Billy watches as the ball Scott hit sails out of the park!

EXT. STANDS, A'S COLISEUM

The fans riot with glee! Including Wolf, happier than anyone.

EXT. FIELD, A'S COLISEUM -

Rounding first, Scott finally lets himself look up. Seeing the ball go out, he raises his hands over his head.

PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The A's have done it! 20 in a row!
And the best record in baseball!

The A's pour onto the field, ecstatic. Mags walks off, alone.

INT. PRESS BOX

Even the cynical media celebrate: they all stand and CHEER. Graham Lutz drops his cigarette when he high-fives a WRITER.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - F/X SHOT

Circling the bases, *Scott grows younger.* He sheds years at a rate of one every 20 feet. By third, he's an 11-YEAR-OLD-BOY.

Waiting for him at home is his team, the A's. They engulf Young Scott until he disappears into a sea of bodies. When they lift him back up, and put him on their shoulders...

Scott is his grown-up self again. The boy is back inside.

EXT. NEXT TO A'S DUG OUT

Paul jumps for you. Billy isn't celebrating. He's staring at: Mags, watching the ball sail out. He lowers his head, upset. Knowing he blew it, he turns and walks off, head down.

Seeing Mags, Billy hurries over to where Jill sits, behind the dugout. Billy must SHOUT over the cheering to be heard.

BILLY
I NEED A PITCHING COACH. THE JOB IS MAGS' IF HE WANTS IT.

Jill nods, grateful. Billy locks eyes with Lauren, sitting next to Jill. After a moment -

LAUREN
You watched a game.

BILLY
Yeah, I see the appeal. I actually enjoyed myself.
(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
(Beat)
Proof I can change. If I have to.

LAUREN
(With a smile)
You have to.

Billy just LAUGHS. A possible future. He and Lauren smile.

Before he goes, Billy looks up at the Owner's box: Rorich gives him a thumbs up. Billy just laughs.

Billy, savoring his triumph, rejoins Paul. Paul looks at him.

PAUL
So, wasn't that a thing of beauty?

BILLY
Hey, it was just another win.

He grins. HOLD ON: Billy and Paul...

PAN OUT TO: The A's, Billy's team, celebrate on the field...

RISE UP: Over the stadium of fans, all going crazy...

RISE UP HIGHER: Until the A's ballpark is a glowing green and white oasis amid the dark industrial flatlands of Oakland.

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: Double doors. Nameplate reads: "General Manager." Doors sweep open to reveal: A huge office. Leather furniture. And a spectacular view of Fenway Park. REVERSE TO SHOW:

INT. GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE, FENWAY PARK -

Billy taking in the office, impressed. John Henry joins him.

JOHN HENRY
Don't worry - you get $100,000 to redecorate. How soon can you start?

BILLY
Right away. I need a day or two to finish up some things at home

JOHN HENRY
Good. Now I want you to do exactly what you did in Oakland, except with more money. You'll have $135 million for player salaries.

Beat. Billy silently tries to comprehend that much money.

JOHN HENRY
You won't have settle for players like Hatteberg, Bradford, and Justice ever again.

Billy's reverie is brought up short. He looks at Henry.

BILLY
What do you mean?

JOHN HENRY
I want you using your same approach but on *real* talent. Sign any free agent, trade for anyone, draft the top choices. Price does not matter. Your days of having to use they guys no one else wants are over.
(Shakes his hand)
You'll be very happy here. We expect great things from you.

HOLD ON: Billy. Does he recall when Joe Torre told him that?

INT. BILLY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Billy finishes packing his suitcase and zips it up. He looks around: the place is bare, everything packed in moving boxes.

INT. HALLWAY, A'S OFFICES - OUTSIDE BILLY'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Billy walks down the hall to his office. Everyone greets him as usual. Reaching his office, he quickly enters. To find -

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE

<u>Paul is unpacking a box of personal items</u>. An awkward moment.

PAUL
Oh! I thought you'd be in Boston.

BILLY
My plane's in two hours. I came by to tell the team - do any of the players know yet? That I'm leaving?

PAUL
No, just Rorich.
(Indicates his box)
(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)
I can't say anything until after the Red Sox announce your hiring, but Rorich made me Interim G.M.

BILLY
I know. I told him to do it.

PAUL
Oh. Thanks. For everything. If it wasn't for you, I'd be in Cleveland shooting T-shirts into the stands.

BILLY
I never would've got the Boston job without you. I know that.

PAUL
Rumor is you got $12.5 million for 3 years. You're like the Jason Giambi of G.M.'s. Stil regret choosing baseball over college?

BILLY
Every day.

PAUL
So why'd you do it?

HOLD ON: Billy, reflecting.

BILLY
Why does anyone do anything?

INT. BEANE HOME - DAY - [1980]

Billy, at 17, plays catch with his DAD. His Dad tells Billy something that makes Billy smile. They keep playing.

RESUME - BILLY'S OFFICE -

HOLD ON: Billy. Then -

BILLY
Money.
(He looks at Paul)
Choosing baseball over college was the only time I ever did something solely for the money.

Beat.

BILLY
I gotta go. Today's "Clean out" day - all the players here yet?

PAUL
Yeah. They're downstairs.

BILLY
I should go tell them. I don't want to miss my plane.

INT. A'S CLUBHOUSE

"Clean out" day: players empty their lockers, pack personal items, turn in equipment. Billy enters, followed by Paul.

BILLY
Hey, listen up, everyone! Something I have to tell you, real quick.

Players stop to gather around. Paul stands off to the side.

BILLY
I have to tell you that - that I'm -

Billy, seeing all the players, all looking at him, hesitates.

BILLY
I appreciate what you did. Other teams have won lots of games. What made us special was *how* we won. I thank each of you for doing it. I asked you to rethink how we did things, and you did. Every aspect.

ANGLE ON - ART HOWE

BILLY (O.S.)
How it's managed.

ANGLE ON - TEAM - Chavez. Zito. Tejada. Justice. Chad. Scott.

BILLY (O.S.)
How it's played. Who is best suited to play it. And why. It took a bunch of guys who got picked last.

CLOSE ON - CHAD

BILLY (O.S.)
Either because they looked funny or....

CLOSE ON - JUSTICE

BILLY (O.S.)
...were told they're too old or...

CLOSE ON - SCOTT

BILLY (O.S.)
...that everyone had given up on...

RESUME - BILLY

BILLY
..to prove them all wrong. I wanted each of you on my team. Not because you were cheap. Because you were invaluable.
(Beat)
I came here to tell you that-
(Still can't do it)
That you proved to everyone - it's more important to know a person's value than their price.

He looks around, taking them in. Grins.

BILLY
I came here to tell you I've been offered the job of General Manager of the Boston Red Sox.

ANGLE ON - The players reaction: resentment, betrayal.

BILLY
The owner will give me all the money I need. To spend any way I want. To buy whoever is available, no matter what they cost. So I took the job. That's what I came here to tell you.
(Beat)
But I've changed my mind. I'm staying. Here. With you.
(Long beat)
I finally found where I belong.

Silence. Broken by Chad, the shyest of all, stepping forward. Chad walks over to Billy and shakes his hand.

Scott walks up. Scott and Billy embrace.

Justice immediately follows. An uncertain moment...until Justice shakes Billy's hand. The handshake becomes a hug.

Tejada and Art walk up. Both slap Billy's back.

One by one, every A's player in the clubhouse walks up to Billy. They shake his hand, hug him, or slap his back.

Billy looks over them at Paul, his ally. Billy reaches out. Paul steps up and takes Billy hand. Both of them smile.

HOLD ON: Billy surrounded. Embraced. Engulfed. By *his* team.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END